WHY WALL ST. CRASHED (AND WILL AGAIN) JAMES J. CRAMER

NOVEMBER 13, 1989 · $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

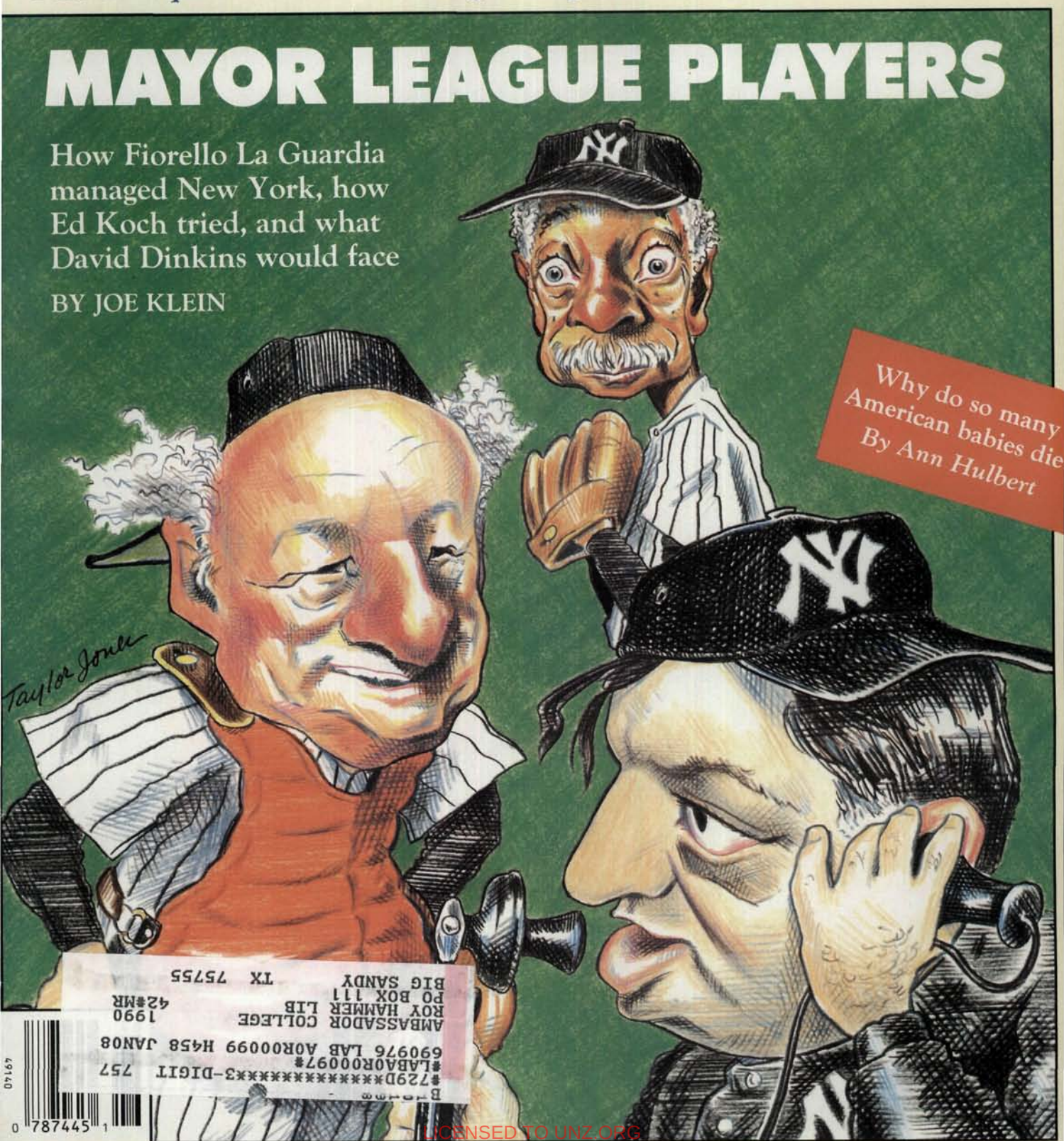
Post-earthquake tristesse · Don Regan's big S&L fix · The Baker-Quayle feud

MAYOR LEAGUE PLAYERS

How Fiorello La Guardia managed New York, how Ed Koch tried, and what David Dinkins would face

BY JOE KLEIN

Why do so many American babies die
By Ann Hulbert



AMBASSADOR COLLEGE 1990
ROY HAMMER LIB 42#MR
PO BOX 111
BIG SANDY TX 75755

B729D**********3-DIGIT 757
#LABA0R00097#
690976 LAB A0R00099 H458 JAN08

0 787445 1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Smooth sailing to 84 countries around the world.

It may surprise you that Lufthansa, the airline of Germany, also flies to Australia, India, Japan, Tanzania, Yemen, anywhere business takes you.

But what shouldn't surprise you is that, no matter how unusual your destination, you can always expect our usual commitment to getting you there without the slightest turbulence.

People expect the world of us.

Lufthansa
German Airlines

Lufthansa is a participant in the mileage programs of United, Delta, USAir and Continental/Eastern. See your Travel Agent for details.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Property of
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE LIBRARY
Big Sandy, Texas

RECEIVED
OCT 31 1989

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Weekly Journal of Opinion

NOVEMBER 13, 1989

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 3,904

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
HENDRIK HERTZBERG
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Managing Editor
DOROTHY WICKENDEN
Senior Editors
FRED BARNES, ANN HULBERT,
MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY,
MORTON KONDRACKE, ROBERT WRIGHT
Editor, New Republic Books (Basic Books)
BILL NEWLIN
Economics
ROBERT KUTTNER
Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Music
EDWARD ROTHSTEIN
Poetry
RICHARD HOWARD
Art
MARK STEVENS
Architecture
HERBERT MUSCHAMP
Contributing Editors
ROBERT COLES, HENRY FAIRLIE,
JAMES K. GLASSMAN, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER,
VINT LAWRENCE, LOUIS MENAND, ADAM MICHNIK,
ROBERT B. REICH, JONATHAN RIEDER,
MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL,
RICHARD L. STROUT, E. V. THAW, ANNE TYLER,
NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN,
MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD
Associate Editor
JACOB WEISBERG
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Assistant to the Editors
JUNE HALEY
Assistant Editor
LEONA HIRAOKA ROTH
Production Manager
BRUCE STEINKE
Assistant Production Manager
KRISTIN CONRADI
Production Associate
ERIC V. PETERSON
Literary Assistant
SARA MOSLE
Interns
DANIEL GROSS, DAVID P. HAMILTON,
WESTON KOSOVA

President
JEFFREY L. DEARTH
Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON
Associate Publisher
TOM HICKS
Controller
JEAN GANDY
Advertising Manager
JENNIFER BARRETT
Circulation Director
PATTY JONES
Accounting Manager
CHRISTINA R. OVERHOLSER
Advertising Assistant
DARLENE BUSCAGLIO
Accounting Assistant
JULIE HAWKINS
Circulation Assistant
PATTI NAJDA
Back Issues and Reception
CAROLYN PARHAM
Corporate Marketing
GUY STODDARD
Leadership Network Advertising
ROBERT E. SENNOTT JR.

Cover by Taylor Jones for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 24.

4 MICHAEL KINSLEY **TRB FROM WASHINGTON: ELECTIONEERING ETIQUETTE** Some rules for honest politicking.

6 CORRESPONDENCE On TNR's crack reporter, competitive reading, &c.

7 THE EDITORS **PRIVATES ON PARADE** When should politicians' sex lives be the public's business? **NOTEBOOK** Books by contributors.

9 FRED BARNES **WHITE HOUSE WATCH: THE WILDER SIDE** Thanks to smart campaigning, Virginia's black gubernatorial candidate has a good chance of winning.

11 EMILY YOFFE **SAN FRANCISCO POSTCARD: SHAKEUP** Notes from the earthquake zone.

12 JAMES J. CRAMER **BASKET CASE** As Wall Street's latest mini-crash shows, futures have brought back the past, complete with wild panics and bear raids.

14 MORTON KONDRACKE **SPARRING PARTNERS** There are signs that Vice President Quayle is picking a fight with Secretary of State Baker. Not a good idea, Dan.

16 JAMES RING ADAMS **NOW IT'S BROKE** Don Regan's big fix for S&L owners is going to cost plenty.

19 ANN HULBERT **SAVING AMERICA'S BABIES** Infant mortality in the capital city of the United States is almost as high as in Sri Lanka. The babies die because their mothers don't get the help they need—which is much more than medical care.

22 STANLEY KAUFFMANN **ON FILMS: CIVILIZED PEOPLE AND OTHERS** Let Allen be Allen: in *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, he breaks free of mimickry and manages some profundity.

24 JOE KLEIN **THE SORROW AND THE CITY** Every Mayor of New York claims lineage from La Guardia; the next will be no exception. A meditation on the origins and future of Fiorellism, the city's municipal religion.

29 DAVID VAN LEER **THE SHOWMAN COMETH** O'Neill is our greatest playwright, but no one likes him much. How might his plays be brought back to life?

34 SAMUEL HYNES **BLOOD, SWEAT, AND VULGARITY** *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* by Paul Fussell

36 SCOTT CAIRNS **POEM** *The Mummy Viewed*

38 ROBERT M. ADAMS **ENDLESS LOVE** *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda* by Miguel de Cervantes, translated from the Spanish by Celia Richmond Weller and Clark A. Colahan

40 ANNE TYLER **CLASS WARS** *Among Schoolchildren* by Tracy Kidder

43 HENRY FAIRLIE **WASHINGTON DIARIST: RAFTING** Post-earthquake tristesse.

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 201, Number 20, Issue 3,904, November 13, 1989. (Printed in the U.S. on October 25, 1989.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 9 & 16, July 17 & 24, Aug. 7 & 14, and Sept. 18 & 25, 1989) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $59.97; foreign, $89.97; Canada, $74.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1989 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

Electioneering etiquette

"It was a stark and jarring sixty seconds. By far Richard Nixon's toughest commercial of the campaign." This was the 1968 Presidential campaign, the one that gave Roger Ailes his start, as immortalized in Joe McGinnis's book *The Selling of the President*. The ad was a montage of riots and war scenes interspersed with a laughing photo of Hubert Humphrey. It was pulled after complaints that it seemed to suggest Humphrey was laughing at American soldiers.

But Ailes had the last laugh. Not only did Nixon win, but with Ailes's help the art of the political commercial has sunk to a level that makes this early effort look like a PBS documentary. (Including the leisurely pace—*60 seconds!*) McGinnis's book is an artifact of a lost age of innocence. Nixon is shown actually composing his own commercial messages on the spot. Ailes's brainchild is a series of hour-long (!) unrehearsed Q&A sessions with voters. The allegedly shocking deception is that the questioners are chosen with demographic calculation rather than at random. (Ailes: "You know what I'd like? . . . A good, mean, Wallaceite cab driver. Wouldn't that be great? Some guy to sit there and say, 'Awright, mac, what about these niggers?' ")

Twenty years of Gresham's Law—the bad politics driving out the good—brought us to last year's George Bush campaign. That is now the model and standard for political campaigns at every level. Of this year's three big races—for Governor of New Jersey and Virginia and Mayor of New York—the one in which the Democrat is surest of victory is New Jersey, where Jim Florio bushed first with a ludicrous commercial about how the Republican, Jim Courter, keeps toxic waste in his back yard. (Several drums of unused heating oil were left on some property Courter co-owned with his brother.)

However, all the tut-tutting about "negative campaigning" is a bit imprecise. There is nothing wrong with pointing out the failings of the opposition. After all, voting "no" is a more powerful expression of the democratic spirit than voting "yes." Furthermore, the insistence that only "the issues" matter—that we should be talking about the future of our schools, not about my five past drunken driving convictions—is a tiresome conceit. Personal history illumines character, and character is a valid "issue." New York Democrat David Dinkins's failure to file his income tax for four years and Virginia Democrat Doug Wilder's official reprimand for bungling a legal case are both relevant, even though they happened many years ago.

Nor is there anything wrong with dwelling on past views an opponent has abandoned. All three Democrats are having a good time with extreme anti-abortion positions their Republican rivals held as recently as a few months ago, but now disown. Virginia Republican Marshall Coleman accuses Wilder of "spreading fear" for suggesting that Coleman might act on his alleged belief that even victims of rape and incest should be ineligible for abortion. Courter says he would not "impose my personal views" on the women of New Jersey. Pshaw. In Coleman's case at least, and that of New York Republican Rudolph Giuliani, the man's more moderate current position is undoubtedly closer to his genuine beliefs. But there is nothing wrong with nailing them to the cross of past demagoguery. And "flip-flops" are a valid issue in themselves, raising the question of whether a candidate genuinely believes in anything at all.

So what is wrong with today's negative campaigning? The basic standard, it seems to me, should be honesty. If a campaign thrust is honest, the voters can weigh its merits. But honesty must be broadly defined. Literal accuracy is the least of it. How you make something an issue is as important as whether you make it an issue.

First, much of the stuff being put forward as campaign issues, though literally true, is basically deceptive. Courter is running an ad saying, "Ten times Florio has taken campaign money from a corrupt union linked to organized crime." That's true, except that the contributions (all of $5,900) were made before the union was under investigation and after it had been taken over by the Feds. And Republican incumbent Governor Thomas Kean took contributions from the same union. If voters knew these facts it would not merely weaken but totally destroy the power of the accusation.

Second, some campaign accusations, though accurate, are trivial, like Courter's drums of heating oil or building code violations in a house Wilder once owned in Richmond. They are the reductio ad absurdum of the fad for "negative research," a partisan version of investigative journalism in which paid gumshoes go after everything down to an opponent's elementary school report cards looking for usable dirt. The dishonesty here lies in implying these things matter, when you know perfectly well they don't.

Third, even accurate assertions become dishonest through a kind of campaign shorthand. The classic example is Bush's use of Michael Dukakis's court-approved decision to veto as unconstitutional a bill requiring teachers to recite the Pledge of Allegiance against their will. This became "Dukakis's veto of the Pledge of Allegiance." Republicans happily promoted this deceptive elision, but inevitably it was taken up by the press, too, out of a totally non-malicious need for compression.

Even in the relatively expansive precincts of a column, it is hard to tell the whole story of Florio's appearance as a character witness on behalf of an employee involved in a fatal car accident, but "interfering in the judicial process" on behalf of an accused killer—which is how Courter's ad puts it (although the man was acquitted)—is pretty unfair. Wilder's ethical lapse as a lawyer 11 years ago may be relevant, but the way Coleman's commercial zooms in on some boilerplate language in the official reprimand ("PROTECT THE PUBLIC") implies that Wilder is some kind of marauding Ted Bundy of the legal profession. Forced to discuss this so-called issue, the press usually just refers to an "ethical lapse"—as I just did—because who's got room to explain that it involved missing a filing deadline?

Fourth, there is—or ought to be—a statute of limitations on flip-flops. Coleman's latest ad is a staged mini-melodrama based on Wilder's support—in 1972—for a bill that would allow cross-examination of rape victims about their sexual history. That bill went nowhere and Wilder later—1976—supported a bill doing exactly the opposite. The ad omits all that. Some things in a candidate's record are simply *not* relevant. Wilder is not attempting a cynical "repositioning" on the question of rape, as other candidates are doing on abortion, and to imply based on this ancient matter that his current beliefs are untrustworthy amounts to a lie.

Finally, there is the question of proportionality. The lie is in the emphasis given to matters that may not be trivial but are hardly worth making the centerpiece of a campaign. This fundamental deception is a feature of all three major campaigns this year. Once again Bush is to blame, with his flags-'n'-furloughs festival last year. It will probably take a war to get American politics back up to the high level of Richard Nixon and Roger Ailes in 1968.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

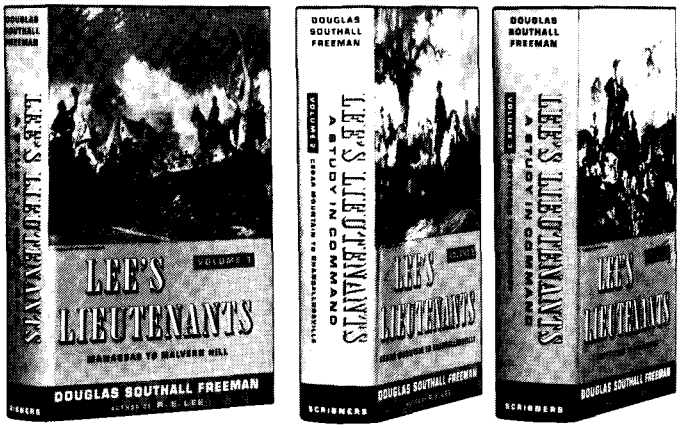
Priceless collections. Big savings.

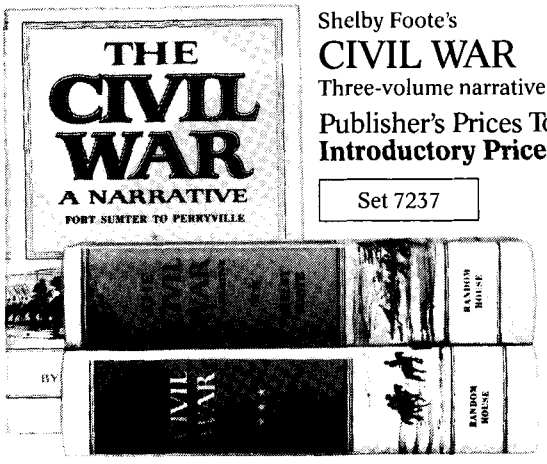
With no risk, no commitment.

Douglas Southall Freeman's
LEE'S LIEUTENANTS
Three-volume narrative

Publisher's Prices Total $90
Introductory Price $20

Set 7179

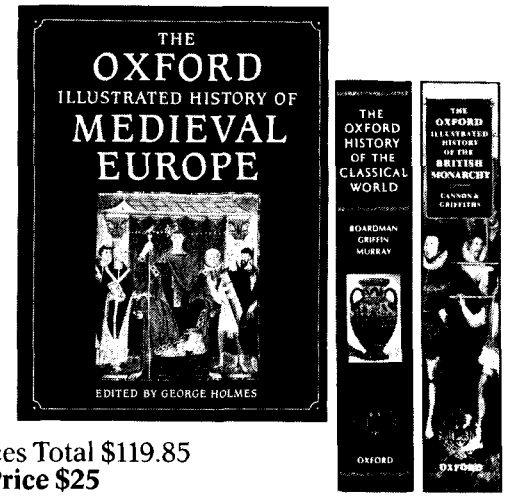




Shelby Foote's
CIVIL WAR
Three-volume narrative

Publisher's Prices Total $105
Introductory Price $15

Set 7237



OXFORD HISTORY LIBRARY
Three-volume reference

Publisher's Prices Total $119.85
Introductory Price $25

Set 1602

Landmark works. Hailed by readers, historians and critics alike.

No matter what area of history you enjoy reading about most, you'll find that History Book Club offers some of the finest selections being published today. And no book club we know offers greater savings–as much as 30% off publishers' list prices.

Your commitment? There is none. Through this special Introductory Offer, you can try History Book Club with no risk, no commitment. You may cancel membership at any time by notifying History Book Club. We may cancel your membership if you elect not to buy at least one book in any six-month period.

Save as much as 30% with low Members' prices. You'll enjoy significant savings off the publisher's price on each selection you make from the 150-200 volumes featured in the History Book Club *Review*, along with the new main title, the "Editors' Choice." History Book Club always offers its members well-made, long-lasting editions.

How the Club works. You'll receive our *Review* and a dated Reply Form 14 times a year (about every 4 weeks), plus up to 4 more offers of special selections. If you want the "Editors' Choice," do nothing. If you want another book, or no books at all, return the Reply Form by the date specified. A shipping and handling charge is added to each shipment.

Your HBC Guarantee: If you receive an unwanted "Editors' Choice" because you had fewer than 10 days to decide, simply return it and pay nothing.

Try History Book Club–and save! Return the attached coupon today.

History Book Club®
Camp Hill, PA 17012-8805

Please enroll me in History Book Club according to the no-risk, no-commitment terms outlined in the accompanying ad. Send me the multivolume set whose number I have entered in the space below. Bill me at the low Introductory Price, plus shipping and handling.

H127-11-2

Set Selection [ ]

9-66

Name_____

Address_____ Apt. #_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

© 1989 History Book Club, Inc. All orders subject to approval. Prices generally higher in Canada.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Crack reporter

To the editors:
Jefferson Morley's article "What Crack Is Like" (October 2) was inane. There have been many splendid articles written detailing the experience and effects of crack, including plenty that quote lengthy, firsthand accounts of what the drug feels like. Morley starts from the assumption, however, that it's not good enough to have *those* accounts, principally from the mouths of poor people of color. It can't really be believed until the story's been told to the white, upper middle class by a white, upper-middle-class writer.

KENNETH ANDERSON
New York, New York

To the editors:
Jefferson Morley provides his readers with a revolutionary new weapon in the individual's private war against drugs: the truth. Morley did not act irresponsibly in his portrayal of crack use as being "a pleasure." It would have been an irresponsible piece if he had lied about the immediate pleasure provided by the use of crack, therefore contributing to a campaign of misinformation that would eventually, as all such campaigns are, be conquered by the truth. Now that I know the truth of just what crack is like, both the temporary pleasure and the horrid pain, I will never be tempted to try it.

MARK GUNN
Worcester, Massachusetts

To the editors:
I recommend that Jefferson Morley be commissioned to smoke crack on a regular basis and report back at intervals, say every six months.

JOHN F. HELLEGERS
Jenkintown, Pennsylvania

To the editors:
Jefferson Morley sure had himself a good time, got a jump on those fuddy-duddy never-smoked-the-stuff policymakers, and proved (to all good liberals who didn't know) that intrepid late-1980s journalists aren't adverse to participating in some outré 1960s-style slumming. Well and good, but when thousands of American children are being born into crack addiction—a new kind of slavery—it seems a bit fatuous to compare the effects of smoking the drug to the feel-goodism of Reagan-era yuppie consumerismo.

EVE JACOBSON
Rego Park, New York

To the editors:
Will we next read of Jefferson Morley selling his body (or buying someone else's) so that he can better understand the Barney Frank/Steve Gobie scandal?

ADAM LIEBERMAN
Washington, D.C.

Self-episteme

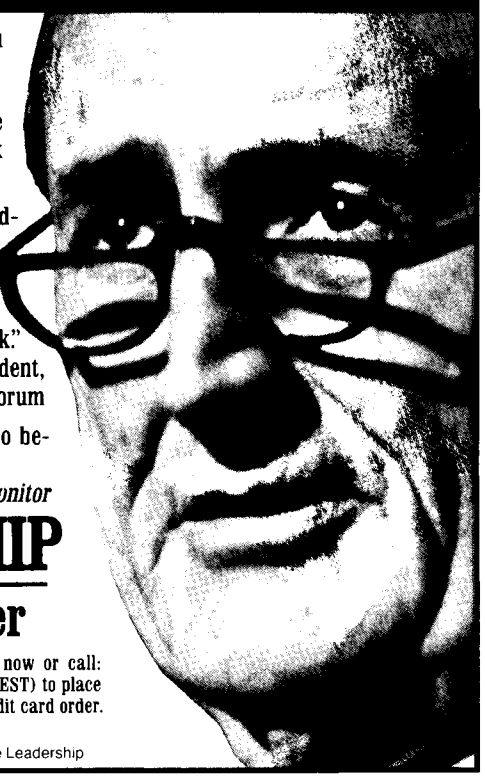
To the editors:
Lawrence Lipking's notion of competitive reading is genuinely instructive about the current malaise—though he does not call it that—of literary studies ("Competitive Reading," October 2). But much of what he says is misleading because of his odd adoption of one of Foucault's most vulnerable concepts—the idea that a given age, or for Lipking even a given academic generation, is governed by a single "*episteme*." This oddness is reflected in the uneasy use of "we," which not only fails to represent the reading practice of many literary scholars today, including many under the age of 40, but also fails to represent Lipking's own reading practice, which at its best in *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* is finely perceptive rather than competitive. It is puzzling that he should pretend to belong to a generation, or a club, of which he is not really a member.

Lipking's definition of the previous generation of literary scholars is still more curious. Of the three assumptions that are said to constitute its *episteme*, the only one that generally holds true is reverence toward literature. And even that could on occasion be brusquely discarded by some of the older critics when they were in a re-evaluating mood: think of the scorn variously heaped on Milton, Fielding, the Romantic poets, and the Victorians from about 1920 to 1940. As for the notion that the previous generation assumed there was one correct reading of a literary text, this is patently a straw man set up by the radical indeterminists that Lipking has bought into. Having been a student of Mark Van Doren, Lionel Trilling, and F. W. Dupee at Columbia in the '50s, and then of Harry Levin and Reuben Brower at Harvard, I can testify that not one of these distinguished teachers ever intimated to any class in which I sat that there was only one "correct" reading to be reached.

The idea that new readings of canonical texts are an insane project is simply a corollary of the imagined principle of the correct reading. In fact, the critics of the '40s and '50s (Trilling, Edmund Wilson,

continued on page 41

"A masterpiece"*



Having served six U.S. Presidents, John W. Gardner uses his wealth of insights to explain what successful leaders must do to instill confidence, morale and motivation in those who look to them.

"A powerful antidote to the nation's leadership crisis." —FRED M. HECHINGER, President, The New York Times Company Foundation, Inc.

"An extraordinary book...A seminal work." —JOSEPH JAWORSKI, President, American Leadership Forum

"Reaches out to everyone who wants to believe good leadership is still possible." —*Christian Science Monitor*

ON LEADERSHIP
by John W. Gardner

220 pages. $19.95. Available at bookstores now or call: 800-323-7445 (between 9:00 A.M. & 5:30 P.M. EST) to place your credit card order.

THE FREE PRESS

*WALTER F. ULMER, JR., President, Center For Creative Leadership

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 13, 1989

PRIVATES ON PARADE

From the fuss over Ralph Abernathy's book, you might think he was saying something new about Martin Luther King Jr. But apart from a few specific details about King's final night, there are no real surprises. We already knew that the great man was also, as the old joke goes, a man. King is important enough that this is worth knowing and trying to understand. The outcry against Abernathy, however understandable as an expression of hurt feelings, is misguided—particularly since the burden of that outcry is not that what Abernathy is saying is untrue, but that he shouldn't be saying it. Reporters who wouldn't hesitate in applying tough-minded standards of truthfulness to punier, living personages such as Jim Bakker—or to historical equals of King such as Jefferson or Franklin Roosevelt—have tongue-lashed Abernathy for his candor about King's philandering. William Raspberry, the normally unsentimental *Washington Post* columnist, pronounced Abernathy a Judas for telling tales out of school, and Bryant Gumbel lectured Abernathy on NBC's "Today Show" for defacing the King "legend" and abetting his enemies. If these journalists really prefer myth to fact, they are in the wrong business.

The King case is an easy one. The trouble the media is having with it reveals a deeper confusion about issues of personal morality, privacy, and the public's right to know. These questions seem to be arising almost continually in our public life. The House, at the moment, hums with scandals involving the sexual behavior of four Representatives. In addition to Barney Frank of Massachusetts, whose troubles have been massively publicized, there are Democrats Gus Savage of Illinois and Jim Bates of California, up on sexual harassment charges, and Republican Buz Lukens of Ohio, convicted of having sex with a minor. The Gary Hart case had its immediate echoes in the exposure of the extramarital love affairs of Governor Richard Celeste of Ohio and Mayor Henry Cisneros of San Antonio. John Tower was voted down partly because of his fondness for drink, made vivid by a reputation for unsubtle barroom flirtatiousness. Douglas Ginsburg missed the Supreme Court on account of the odd joint of marijuana. Accompanying these media feeding-frenzies (four of those mentioned above made the cover of *Newsweek*) has been an increasing amount of soul-searching by journalists about where to draw the line between public and private and about how to make such decisions.

Hart was supposed to be a special case, but the many cases since have made it clear that once a scandal has surfaced, prurience carries the day. The issue gets resolved in favor of investigation, exposure, and publication. The revelation of salacious details is justified on the basis of news value or competitive pressures or insight into "character"—in short, on any remotely plausible basis except disapproval of adultery itself (which violates an elite social taboo against moralism). Once the details are out, the discussion ensues about what should have been disclosed. First the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* exposed Celeste for "womanizing" on the pretext that his Presidential ambitions made it news. Afterward the paper aired objections to its decision—too late for the Celeste family. Once one paper prints a story, others have the excuse that the lid is off, or that the way in which the victim of the disclosure is "handling" the disclosure is news, even if the disclosure itself

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

isn't. Before the next sex story strikes, it makes sense to articulate some principles by which the conflicting claims of public and private can be arbitrated.

This is one debate in which the extremes both have something to recommend them. On one side are those who contend that a holder or seeker of office is as entitled to a private life as is any other citizen, and that the public has no more right to inquire into his or her sex life than does any other employer or prospective employer. On the other side are those who contend that self-government means citizens must be free to cast their votes and petition their representatives on the basis of whatever information they deem relevant. There's merit in both views. The former derives from respect for personal privacy, the latter from the democratic instinct. And both yield a satisfying "bright line" that answers the question of whether to invade the boudoir in any given instance.

Yet neither is quite satisfactory, in theory or in practice. The purist position in favor of privacy doesn't acknowledge that private misbehavior sometimes does intrude on public conduct. To take only one example, John F. Kennedy's libidinous excesses opened him to mob blackmail. This is not to say that he should not have been President; but it was not the place of the White House press corps to shield the public from a truth all its members knew. (Had the press been less routinely compliant, by the way, the President almost certainly would have behaved more wisely.) And this position both overestimates the public's censoriousness and underestimates its ability to put such matters in perspective.

The purist right-to-know position, on the other hand, gives the public too much credit for disinterested concern. Gossip is always fascinating, and we will concoct justifications for listening to it even where it has no direct relevance (as is usually the case). This view also disregards the way sex scandals happen in practice. Seldom is factual information about the private lives of politicians "out there" for reporters to print or not as they see fit. Journalists are familiar with scores of rumors, some fraction of which might be true. There is no way to investigate them without prying into the intimate affairs of those who have done nothing at all or whose private behavior has no public implications.

Rejecting these alternatives opens the great, gray void between "never" and "always." But there is no alternative to judging individual cases on their merits. The way to reach a decision about whether a matter should be made public is to ask questions about its relevance.

Is it material to the job? Everyone's sex life—even the lack of one—explicates his or her "character" or personality. The public, however, has no intrinsic right to understand its leaders and their motivations at this level; and it is a coarse parody of Freudianism that imagines that a superficial study of a person's sexual behavior yields insights into character that a deep study of his or her public record leaves obscure. The test is whether private conduct impinges on public performance. In the case of Gus Savage, accused of sexually harassing a Peace Corps volunteer on an official trip to Zaire, this test is clearly met. A legislator in the habit of showing up drunk on the floor of the Senate would also meet this criterion. But if John Tower merely went on the odd after-hours bender, it shouldn't have disqualified him from running the Pentagon.

Was the law broken? Though Congress often operates on the opposite principle, it seems reasonable to demand that those who make laws also obey them. Lawbreaking is a basic criterion for legitimate public interest. An attempt must be made to substantiate any allegation of violations of law that emerge. The press cannot ignore Stephen Gobie's charges against Barney Frank, though it is far from clear that Frank knowingly broke laws. But the fact that some legal transgression may have taken place in no way excuses efforts, such as those of the Moon-owned *Washington Times*, to engineer the story for maximum destructiveness to Frank's career. It should also be remembered that not all laws are of equal magnitude. Many states still have oral sodomy statutes on the books that are unenforced and unenforceable; unprosecuted victimless misdemeanors do not on their own justify "investigative" enthusiasms.

Is the public being lied to? A measure of hypocrisy is indispensable to any social order, and is implicit in any notion of privacy. And appearing with the wife and kids in a Christmas card photo while carrying out an extramarital affair is too banal, too common a contradiction, to justify exposure and vilification. At some point, however, the contrast between personal conduct and public facade becomes intolerable, as in the case of former Representative Robert Bauman, who advocated antigay laws while soliciting male prostitutes in a D.C. gay bar. But if a politician consistently maintains that his private life is no one's business but his own, and his record shows he respects other people's privacy as well, then there's no excuse for invading his bedroom.

Does the office make special demands? The Surgeon General should be a non-smoker. The Drug Czar shouldn't get stoned. It seems reasonable that Supreme Court Justices be held to the highest standard of adherence to the law. Many jobs do involve setting a specific moral example. In these cases, behavior that would otherwise be private becomes pertinent to one's qualification. In the case of Presidents, questions of judgment as well as moral example come into play. The holder of the most important post in the world, with his finger on the proverbial button, must be sober and controlled at all times. If a Presidential candidate is recklessly promiscuous (not just quietly adulterous), it legitimately raises the question of his good sense. If reporters have information to this effect—and during a national campaign they're apt to find out—they should share it.

The problem is that in the wind tunnel of national publicity, perspective gets blown away. Gossip explodes into news and wrecks lives and careers. The punishment doesn't fit the crime. Before Hart's sexual indiscretions could be thought over by the voters he was finished. Perhaps his Presidential candidacy deserved summary exe-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cution, but his public career did not. He may lack the caution and stability we look for in Presidents, but he remains eminently qualified to serve in the Senate or elsewhere. Yet today he is a political untouchable.

Hart and others have gotten caught in the gears of massive changes in public attitudes about private mores. Respect for the *public institution* of marriage is on the decline, while demand for the *private authenticity* of marriage is on the rise. That is why we are now more willing to tolerate divorce than adultery in our Presidents, a complete reversal of the attitudes of a generation ago.

Indeed, however much it may seem otherwise, public tolerance in general grows as a result of these periodic media overreactions. We don't like to see our leaders disgraced for infractions that are familiar in our own lives. By the time the next Douglas Ginsburg comes up for confirmation, the public will be closer to understanding that for an American 40-year-old, not to have smoked pot qualifies as deviant behavior. There are bound to be martyrs in the meanwhile. That's a shame, but it doesn't justify journalists putting themselves in the godlike position of deciding what the public is sophisticated enough to handle. It's an argument instead for serious, unsensational reporting of low sex in high places when, and only when, it makes a difference.

NOTEBOOK

SHELF LIFE: We're happy to take note of new books by three of our own. Contributing editor Robert B. Reich's *The Resurgent Liberal (And Other Unfashionable Prophecies)* has recently been published by Times Books; some of the prophesies first appeared in these pages. John Updike's *Just Looking: Essays on Art*, which likewise includes several pieces originally written for TNR, has just appeared from Knopf. And Mahnaz Z. Ispahani's *Roads and Rivals: The Political Uses of Access in the Borderlands of Asia* is just out from Cornell University Press.

A shrewd campaign that could make history.

THE WILDER SIDE

By Fred Barnes

RICHMOND

In his first speech as Virginia's first black state Senator, Douglas Wilder attacked the official state anthem, "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny." The song has a passage—"That's where the old darkey's heart am long'd to go"—that he said "burned in my ear." That was 1969. Whites, including A. L. Philpott, now speaker of the Virginia House, were horrified. In 1981 Wilder helped Charles Robb win the Governorship. Later they feuded bitterly. In 1982 Wilder threatened to bolt the Democratic Party and run for the U.S. Senate as an independent if Owen Pickett, handpicked by Robb and other party leaders but too conservative for Wilder, were the party's nominee. Pickett, humiliated, withdrew. In 1986, as Lieutenant Governor, Wilder noisily opposed a sales tax increase that Governor Gerald Baliles advocated to pay for an ambitious road-building program. Baliles was upset.

Now Philpott, Robb, Pickett, and Baliles are backing Wilder's bid to become the first black elected Governor. Philpott and Baliles have stumped with him. Robb, elected to the Senate in 1988, appears in a TV ad for Wilder. "I've worked closely with Doug," he says. "On the really important issues, we've always agreed." Robb exaggerates. In a letter to Wilder in 1986, he said, "Your credibility with most key participants in the political process is disappearing rapidly and many who have supported you in the past are no longer sure you can be trusted." Robb, who leaked the letter, not only has overcome his qualms. Usually stiff on TV, he is downright animated in talking up Wilder in the commercial.

I cite all this as evidence that Wilder, 58, is an extremely clever politician who's got a 50-50 shot, or better, of being elected Governor on November 7. He's got the unanimous support of the white Democratic establishment, no easy feat. White Democrats depend on black votes, but they often don't reciprocate when a black runs. Wilder has demanded reciprocity, and he's gotten it in a state that pursued "massive resistance" to racial integration into the 1960s. In 1985 he scared off Democratic rivals, won the Lieutenant Governor's nomination by default, then upset a staid, overconfident Republican candidate named John Chichester. This year he was unopposed for the gubernatorial nomination. Republicans were thrilled, figuring it'd be a cinch to do to Wilder what George Bush did to Michael Dukakis in 1988.

Wilder is no Dukakis. He's a one-time liberal who's campaigning as a moderate, just like the Duke. But Wilder is personally charming, a fellow whose enemies become friends. (His scheduler is Dwight Holton, son of Virginia's first Republican Governor, Linwood Holton.) Wilder is a pragmatist. He abandoned opposition to the death penalty, deciding that it is not unconstitutional or meted out unfairly to blacks. On taxes, Wilder's opposition in 1986 to the sales tax hike has come back to help him. As Governor, he promises not to initiate any new taxes. His Republican foe, Marshall Coleman, 47, has goaded him for not vowing to veto any tax increase, as Coleman has. But I suspect Wilder has gone far enough for most voters.

Wilder and his campaign manager, Mark Warner, cite three differences between Dukakis's campaign and theirs. Dukakis was unknown around the country, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wilder is a household name in Virginia. "I'm a statewide officeholder," says Wilder. "People know I didn't slip into office. I won handily. I didn't stay still and say nothing." So when Republicans label him a liberal, Wilder argues, voters know better. "My record is more mainstream." Still, Wilder has been quick to respond to Coleman's attacks. "People expect me not to be a patsy." Coleman's first negative TV ad assailed him for opposing the death penalty. Wilder responded by pointing to his recent support for capital punishment and zinging Coleman for going negative. The back-and-forth on the death penalty also reflects Wilder's effort not to cede any issues the way Dukakis did.

Dukakis groped for an issue (Iran-*contra*, capital gains, etc.) to use against Bush but never found one. Wilder has: abortion. He stumbled initially after the *Webster* decision. Wilder told the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* that abortions for birth control should not be available. A few days later Molly Yard of the National Organization for Women appeared in Richmond and called Wilder a "wimp." She was wrong. During his first debate with Coleman on July 15, he seized on Coleman's backing for the least popular part of the pro-life position: banning abortions in instances of rape or incest. Coleman's position is that abortions should be allowed only to save the life of the mother. "How can you justify saying to a woman who has been a victim of rape or incest that she cannot have an abortion?" asked Wilder.

Coleman wavered. He said he'd checked with Virginia legislators and found they weren't about to ban abortions in the case of rape or incest. That was fine with him, he suggested. Outlawing or even curbing abortions is not a top priority for Coleman, his campaign manager, Boyd Marcus, told me later. In mid-September Wilder went on TV with an ad, produced by consultant Frank Greer, that framed the pro-choice argument brilliantly. "On the issue of abortion, Marshall Coleman wants to take away your right to choose and give it to the politicians," the ad said. "Doug Wilder believes the government shouldn't interfere in your right to choose. He wants to keep the politicians out of your personal life."

Wilder dwelt on abortion in a televised debate with Coleman on October 9. He challenged Coleman to say "whether he would sign a bill which calls for the ending of abortion even in the instances of rape or incest." When Coleman was evasive, Wilder bore in again. "What would you do if the bill came on your desk miraculously or any other kind of way?" Coleman never answered. With the abortion issue paramount in the campaign, Coleman lost ground both because of his position (polls show Virginia is a pro-choice state) and because he waffled. The Mason-Dixon poll found that Wilder had jumped to a 45 percent to 43 percent lead in October after trailing 44 to 38 percent a month earlier. Wilder, by the way, favors parental consent in abortions for women under 18. He now says his condemnation of abortions for birth control was only a personal view, not a policy position.

Coleman, meanwhile, is aggressively emulating Bush. In TV commercials, speeches, and debates, he points to conduct in Wilder's past as examples of bad character. In 1985 Chichester raised the same things in the final days of the Lieutenant Governor's race, too late to save himself but enough to cut Wilder's margin. Wilder won 52 percent to 48 percent. Maybe race had something to do with it. Wilder says it didn't. Republicans agree. They think the character attacks worked.

Coleman started sooner this time. In the October 9 debate, he was already in full cry. "I hear a lot of people asking me about the fact that my opponent is the only candidate ever to run for Governor who was reprimanded by the Supreme Court of Virginia," he said. Wilder was scolded in 1978 for botching the case of a couple injured in a car accident. Coleman also pressed him on why he refused to clean up a dilapidated house he owns in Richmond. "What does this say about your sensitivity, a millionaire, a man with two Mercedes, who can't spend a few dollars to fix up this house?" Coleman cited a 1977 Wilder bill that called for the state to pay $51,523 to a woman who'd sued Wilder for malpractice, and Wilder's practice of charging a fee for speeches as Lieutenant Governor.

Wilder laughed when Coleman raised these in the debate. On the rundown property he said, "I really can't believe you're still chewing this rag. The people of Virginia are concerned with issues, Marshall. . . . That has never been a story worth repeating. [In] 1985 it came up that people knew about it. I was elected Lieutenant Governor. It's run its course, leave it alone, let's move on, please." Coleman didn't. "Why didn't you just sell one of the Mercedes, buy a Pontiac, and fix the darn place up, Doug?"

Coleman, who's spending $8 million to $9 million on the general election, has the money to play up character questions. If Wilder is tarnished even slightly, it may be enough to elect Coleman. In Virginia voters don't register by party (everyone used to be a Democrat), but the electorate is probably 30 percent Democrat, 30 percent Republican, 40 percent up for grabs. To win, a Democrat has to run strongly in the three corners of Virginia: Southwest, Tidewater, the Washington suburbs. Coleman believes the tax issue will aid him in the suburbs.

Then there's the race factor. Some Republicans think that race alone has kept Coleman's chances alive. I doubt it. Wilder says race is no factor at all. "I never encountered one [racial] incident in 1985 or 1989," he says. In truth, both Coleman and Wilder are afraid of the issue. They don't know how it might play in Virginia (15 percent of the electorate is black) if raised publicly. Wilder rarely mentions race specifically, and he hasn't invited any national black leaders to campaign for him. In the introduction to a biography, *Wilder: Hold Fast to Dreams* by Donald Baker, Jesse Jackson wrote that he's willing to help Wilder by "proximity or distance." Wilder wants distance. Who can blame him? •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SAN FRANCISCO POSTCARD

SHAKEUP

By Emily Yoffe

At first I thought all the fans were jumping in unison. Then, when it felt as if the section of the stadium I was sitting in were rolling onto the field, my second thought was, "Leave it to California to have special effects for the World Series." The rolling continued long enough for me to have a third thought: "If this doesn't stop soon, we're all going to die." When the waves finally subsided there was a beat of silence, then the 60,000 of us in Candlestick Park for the third game of the World Series let up a roar. I thought of Winston Churchill's remark about his youthful war experience, "Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result." It *was* exhilarating at first; the natural world seemed to be commenting on the contest at hand. Spectators, now more pumped up than ever, called out, "Play ball." The power was out in the park, but soon scores of radios and portable TVs started broadcasting the disasters on the highways and around the city. The feeling that we had all just come through the ultimate California experience was replaced with the sickening knowledge that hundreds had not.

As the catastrophe unfolded, it became clear that the terms in which we measure the reality of extraordinary events were created in California. Still at the ballpark, peering at the screens of Sony Watchmen showing scenes of the Bay Bridge collapse, everyone kept murmuring, "It's just like a movie." One TV reporter coming back from the collapsed and burning buildings of San Francisco's Marina district summed up Hollywood's effect on the public imagination: "It looked like an earthquake ought to look in the movies. It looked *too* real."

I moved to Palo Alto, about 35 miles south of San Francisco, six weeks ago from Austin, Texas. When I arrived at my apartment, I found that my landlady had left a notebook full of helpful information: how to work the heater, phone numbers of neighbors, and so on. The first page of the notebook read: In Case of Major Earthquake. Yes, I knew someday a big one, even THE big one, would hit, but surely it wasn't going to be during the nine months I was here. The notebook struck me at the time as an example of California macho—telling the rest of the world how dangerous, expensive, and crowded the state is, in an effort to keep everyone else out of what is obviously paradise.

When quake talk comes up, Californians tend to display a blasé superiority. If you ask longtime residents what a quake feels like, they often tell you they can't really describe it because they slept through the last three. One professor, born here in 1926, told me he's been through so many that he usually doesn't bother to get up from his desk. But because Californians have a personal relationship to Richter scale readings, they knew just how serious this 7.1 was. "I've been through a 4.2 and a 5.1, so I know what they feel like. I could tell this was a big one," Sharon Long, a biology professor, told me.

At Stanford a behavioral continental divide was in evidence. Because the initial tremors were unusually strong, the Californians knew exactly what was going on and moved to door jambs and under tables. It was the Easterners who at first assumed they were suffering an attack of vertigo, and then, realizing what was happening, ran screaming through corridors. The library stacks emptied onto floors gave the impression that hooligans from *A Clockwork Orange* had vented their fury on this citadel of privilege.

The next day at the student union volunteers handed out pamphlets titled "Be Quake Safe: An Earthquake Preparedness Guide for Stanford Students." Such disaster literature typically conveys an incongruously chipper tone. I remember a similar document from the '50s about surviving a nuclear attack from the Russians; it assured us that once we got out of our bomb shelters our cars would still run. "Be Quake Safe," after extolling the "stimulation, learning, friendships, and fun" that are part of living in a Stanford dorm, advises we all keep an emergency survival kit handy. It's obviously sound advice; one seismologist, being interviewed about the inevitable next major quake, said it was likely to run on a fault line straight through Palo Alto. But the idea of keeping a box packed with peanut butter and legal papers makes me feel a little like a member of a survivalist cult. And it seems so un-Californian. California is about endless beginnings, not preparing for the end.

The universal responses to disasters such as this, the clearing of the rubble and the assigning of the blame, will go on for months—with the estimates of damage revised upward daily. The peculiar thing about trying to recover from an earthquake is that it provides its own flashbacks. The aftershocks feel like a large but fleet animal is skittering across the room. The physical effect itself is nothing like the bucking bronco of the 7.1, but now my mind is filled with the ghastly images of crushed bodies and collapsed buildings. So when a small aftershock awoke me around 1 a.m. the other night, my fear was more acute than anything I had felt in Candlestick. The psychologists who have filled the airwaves since the quake would say this is a good thing. We have been blanketed with advice to acknowledge our fear, share our fear, and anticipate our fear if we're not in fear now. The message to the millions who came through unscathed is: if you don't feel like an emotional wreck, that's a sure sign you are one.

Although most of us are fine, many are not. This raises the delicate question of post-quake etiquette. Is it permissible to complain about commuting when hundreds are homeless? Is it all right to obsess about your silly reaction during the quake when scores are dead?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What about promotional items? I heard two San Francisco radio stations deal with this issue in different ways. As I flipped the dial one d.j. was hawking the inevitable "I Survived the Quake of '89" T-shirts; another was conducting an impromptu poll among listeners as to whether such a T-shirt would be in bad taste. And what about wisecracks? Good taste or bad, they help everybody cope. I've heard dozens over the past few days. The setups are all different but the punchline is almost always the same. "The earth moved."

EMILY YOFFE, a senior editor at *Texas Monthly*, is on a John S. Knight Fellowship at Stanford University.

Back from the futures.

BASKET CASE

By James J. Cramer

NEW YORK

One Friday afternoon quite recently my equity trader, who enters all orders to buy and sell stocks for my investment management firm, needed to dash uptown for an appointment. I told her, "The market's pretty quiet, but why don't you call when you get to midtown?" By the time she checked in, the stock market had crashed. More than 180 points had disappeared from the Dow Jones average in the time it took for the Lexington Avenue subway to travel from Wall Street to Grand Central. Five billion dollars in IBM's market value was gone. Eight percent of American Telephone's worth had vanished. There were no buyers for General Motors, five points down from the last big sale. Fortunately the massacre occurred with less than an hour of trading left before the weekend break. We'll never know how close we came to total collapse; the market, like a bloodied boxer, got saved by the bell.

Market commentators trotted out standard explanations: the breakdown in the $6.75 billion deal for United Airlines had shocked the market; stocks had run up too high without a correction; the producer price index had shown a pick-up in inflation. Any one of these could have caused the market to decline 20 or 30 points. Together they can't explain a seven percent drop in the value of America's securities in an hour's time.

The real reason is that America's stock exchanges don't work anymore. The system by which we buy and sell stocks is fundamentally flawed. We saw that on October 19, 1987, and we saw it again on Friday, October 13, 1989. No doubt we will see it again, soon, unless somebody does something to fix our markets. How did this massive, powerful machine that has enriched millions of people and created capital so that many millions more could benefit get so out of kilter?

To find out, we have to go back to the beginning of the decade, when a little commodities exchange in Kansas City came up with a novel way to eliminate its dependence on trading winter wheat futures. The ideal was to bundle a group of stocks together in a bushel, just like wheat, and trade it, as if stocks were just another commodity.

Futures allow producers of commodities to hedge the risk that demand for their products might decline. A large food processing company might go into the corn futures market to ensure that it will have enough corn to meet the cereal demand. This shifts the risk of supply from the company to the producer, who even under drought circumstances must supply the grain on the due date. The cereal company may lock in at a price higher than the prevailing market price, but its main concern is producing its boxes of corn flakes. Of course, consumers might be willing to lock in forward prices by buying futures. Speculators can take either side, depending on their view.

Like commodities futures, the Standard & Poor's 500 future—the most widely traded—is an agreement between a seller and a buyer to deliver or take delivery of the actual cash value of the underlying basket of 500 stocks on a future date. The contract's value at any given moment is easily obtainable—it's the sum of the underlying stocks, multiplied by $500. It trades visibly; thousands of the "contracts," as they are known in the pits, are exchanged in a given day.

Stocks don't have producers and consumers. However, large funds—whether pension, mutual, or just plain investment—do sell and buy stocks in large quantities. The idea behind bundling stocks was to create a method for these stock users to lay off risk or get invested faster. So if a portfolio manager didn't like the market, rather than getting on the phone to his broker and unloading dozens of stocks at whatever prices obtainable, the manager could just sell some futures. Theoretically, the Chicago pit—that is, the S&P 500 pit—would be full of buyers. Similarly, if a manager wanted more exposure to the market, he could just purchase some futures. The futures had interest from the very beginning because theyrepresented an improvement in transaction costs and liquidity over buying actual stocks.

When the stock futures were created, some market commentators worried that this kind of trading was no different than gambling on the overall direction of the market, as no intrinsic investing in common stocks would occur. But such concerns were dismissed as arguments about improved liquidity for portfolio managers carried the day. Now, eight years later, we have baskets on just about everything imaginable, including utility stocks, large capitalization stocks, and computer equities. The basket traders are so sophisticated, and the numbers of contracts they trade so vast, that they are now far more important movers of the underlying stocks than the investors themselves.

No one foresaw the vast power the basket traders

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would have. Surely no one would have advocated their creation if it had been suggested that the traders could move the equity markets 500 points down on a dark Monday, or 200 points on an otherwise slow Friday afternoon.

Those of you who aren't in the trenches of American capitalism know of this flaw in the mechanism only by the arcane name "program trading." In fact, that two-word description is a canard. The program traders only link the selling of the stocks in the baskets in the S&P's future pits to the underlying equities on the New York Stock Exchange. (They do so on a risk-free spread basis. As the index gets too far away from the underlying stocks, the program traders either buy the stocks or sell the futures to bring them back in line. They pocket the difference.) They are simply the messengers of the sentiment in Chicago, translating selling in that market to its neighbor in New York. Journalists call them program traders because they use computer programs, not human beings, to generate automatic buy and sell orders in New York in reaction to the movement of the S&P baskets in Chicago. These gremlins often get the credit for quick 20 and 40 point rises in the Dow; they also get the blame for the calamities.

Those of us in the trenches, however, know that the real blame lies in the inherent inability of the equity market mechanism to absorb the glee or punishment emanating from Chicago. The key to the equation is capital. Those who buy stocks on the American stock markets traditionally must put up 50 percent of the capital to purchase stocks. Those who sell futures only have to put up about five percent of the capital. Thus simple arithmetic tells you that the Chicago futures traders have, at a minimum, ten times the power of their New York counterparts. It's actually much more imbalanced, because most equity institutional buyers use cash, not margin, or loans from brokerage houses with stocks as collateral, to buy stocks.

But that's not the only distortion. All equity markets have been prone to sell-off from time to time, as the business cycle disrupts economic growth or interest rates rise too high to support company expansion. But back in the '20s, before the Great Crash, some stocks used to go down because of another, more insidious factor: bear raids by short sellers who sell stock they don't own, with the intent of buying it back at lower prices. It is the inverse of buying a stock with the hope of it going up. Groups of individuals would target companies and begin selling massive quantities of those companies' stocks in order to drive down the price of the securities. These raiders, of course, did not own the stocks to begin with. They simply borrowed the stocks they sold from the vaults of America's great securities firms, which loan out securities kept in safekeeping for many customers.

Let's say the raider wanted to bring down the stock of General Motors in order to cause a panic so he could take over the company at a reduced price. The stock opens at 45. He sells 100,000 shares at 45, filling the needs of all those who wanted to buy at that price. Then the stock declines to 44. He still wants to sell his borrowed stock, but there are no more buyers willing to pay 45. When the 44 buyers step up, he sells to them, satiating their interests. The stock drops to 43; the process is repeated. Since he can sell an unlimited amount of stock, he would quickly fill all the needs of all buyers. Soon holders would panic, and begin unloading shares, as they would presume that something was wrong with General Motors. Ultimately, the raider could drive the stock to well below its intrinsic worth, where he could "cover" or buy his sold stock back, and buy the company on the cheap.

You might ask: How could other investors not see the terrific buying opportunity created by the raid, and snap up shares just ahead of the raiders? But that supposition ignores innate market psychology. When stocks decline precipitately, investors don't think calmly about buying; they want to join the stampede of sellers because they don't want to lose any more money.

Bear raids were so devastating to the capital formation business, and unfair to the regular shareholders who saw companies stolen from them cheaply by the raiders' greed, that a consensus formed to outlaw them after the Great Crash. The Securities and Exchange Commission created a novel rule to frustrate these stock bashers: short sellers could only sell stock a price higher (one-eighth or better) than the last sale transacted. Short sellers could not move stocks down in price. They had to wait until buyers came along to purchase stocks at improved prices. As is said in the business, the seller would have to wait for an "uptick" in the stock to get his sell order completed. As you can imagine, it is hard to cause a panic when you are selling a stock on the way up.

Now, cut to the '80s. In order to facilitate the interaction of the futures markets with the stock markets, the SEC has blessed an exception to this longtime anti-bear raid rule. Selling borrowed stock that is linked to futures need not wait for buyers. Most of the computer-generated sell orders can sell at any price, regardless of how low it might be from the previous sale, and whether the stock is owned or not before the sale (sometimes the program sellers own the stocks in the S&P, sometimes they don't). In other words, program traders at the large securities firms are exempted from the uptick rule. Poof: the longtime consensus is gone. And General Motors, at 3:45 on a Friday afternoon, drops four points in a row as those who don't own the stock keep selling without regard to the anti-bear raid rule.

The 1987 raid had the same effect as the bear raids of the '20s. Just as the '20s raiders were able to drive stocks down low enough to take them over with less capital, these futures traders drove stocks down so far below fundamentals that the following two years produced billions of dollars in takeovers, as suitors from around the world gobbled up our companies at bargain prices. The only difference this time was that the futures raiders in '87 didn't do the takeovers themselves. They couldn't; despite their furious selling, they have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much less capital then the equity buyers.

What can be done about this corruption of the system? To start with, we should scrap all the jerry-built rules added on since the Crash of 1987. Chief among them is a foolish rule that shut down futures trading for a half-hour after a decline of roughly 100 points on the Dow averages. That proved to be a big joke on Friday the 13th. Everyone watching his stock screen during the break that day knew that the waves of basket selling coming from Chicago would continue when trading opened again, so stocks were dumped indiscriminately anyway.

Second, we should come to terms with the real culprit: the inequitable powers of the futures traders in Chicago and the investors in New York. Simply changing the margin rules to make futures sellers put up as much capital as equity buyers would help. The futures people always fight this change because they say that the "hedging" capabilities of the futures would be lost. But so what? Stocks aren't like grain. We may need futures to lay off risk for farmers who would otherwise be unwilling to raise wheat to feed the world. All that we "save" with futures are investment managers who own too much or too little stock—hardly a national treasure. But, ironically, we would probably have millions of more stock market buyers without futures on stocks. We know from Federal Reserve data and countless polls that individual investors have pulled out of the stock market in droves—even at times of rising prices—because they fear the volatility caused by futures interacting with stocks. People would rush into our markets in droves once futures were banned.

Third, we should encourage a new debate about the fundamental need for futures on stocks. Unfortunately, the current debate always begins with the inevitability of a product that is less than a decade old, and instead gets diverted to remedies about how to live with increased volatility that futures cause. We don't need Rube Goldberg to fix the link between stocks and futures; we simply don't need futures. Futures traders defend their existence by saying that if stock futures are banned, then the process would just be moved offshore. But that's nonsense: the futures need to be linked to the actual stocks to make any sense because the contracts do represent actual stocks and their cash value must be delivered upon expiration, and if they are banned, the Wall Street firms that execute all stock trades would not be allowed to enter program trades in response to futures activity. Further they present opponents of futures as Luddites, unwilling to accept new computer technology that moves stocks faster than people can think. Nonsense again: the debate isn't about technology, it's about capital. If the investors in stocks had the same amount of buying or selling power as the users of the computers, and if the users of computers had to be bound by the rules against bear raids, we would be proud to embrace the new technology. But that's not the case.

In the meantime, shareholders of companies and companies themselves should sue to get their stocks out of the various baskets, in order to allow their stocks to trade on the fundamentals, not on the whims of Chicago speculators. The lawsuits make sense: many of the companies that received bids at vastly reduced prices after the 1987 crash saw billions ripped off from shareholders. Judging by the quick rise in stocks back to pre-crash levels, we know that without the futures selling many of these companies would still be independent, with stockholders much richer to boot.

Finally, let's force the sell orders generated from computers to obey the time-honored rule that buyers be found to pay up for stock that is sold but not owned. No exceptions, for program short sellers.

Don't look for leadership on Wall Street. Many of these firms, traditionally a short-sighted lot, benefit from the programs that stem from futures trading. They generate commission revenue (13 percent of New York Stock Exchange volume last month) and can be very profitable for firms that commit their own capital to them. Don't look toward Washington, either. Everyone seems to get buffaloed by Wall Streeters who toss up the typical defenses mentioned above. And don't look to the managements of companies that find their stocks manhandled by these programs. The smart ones used these opportunities to buy their companies from the shareholders on the cheap during the 1987 crash. The dumb ones still don't understand what's happening.

No need to look for leadership at all. It will only come after the now totally predictable crash that will occur someday at the opening round, when there are a few pieces of bad news in the papers and much too much time before the bell.

JAMES J. CRAMER is president of Cramer & Co., a New York investment management firm.

Baker and Quayle go at it, sort of.

SPARRING PARTNERS

By Morton Kondracke

Just as official spokesmen said, there wasn't much difference in the substance of the Soviet policy addresses that Secretary of State James Baker and Vice President Dan Quayle delivered on October 16 and 17. But in tone and tilt, the two speeches spoke volumes about the different stances these two potential rivals for the Presidency take in foreign policy. We may be in for the first top-level conflict in the so far tranquil Bush Administration.

"When I saw the *New York Times* account of Baker's speech, I said 'damn that motherfucker,'" said one prominent conservative you'd expect wouldn't use such language. "But then I got a copy of the speech, read it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

twice, and found it wasn't so bad after all. Of course, I liked the Quayle speech better." He was meant to. Quayle has been warned by fellow conservatives that he shouldn't count on being Bush's running mate in 1992, that rivals will mount a dump-Dan campaign beginning about November 1990, and that he'd better keep the Republican right energized and on his side. So Quayle is a Bush loyalist, but he's also a hard-liner and an activist Vice President, as Richard Nixon was to Dwight Eisenhower. Quayle's effort to distinguish himself may lead to trouble in the future with Baker, a notoriously tough hombre.

If you listen very closely, you can hear some rumbling already—all from Quayle's side. One Quayle aide, not senior staff but no clerk-typist either, told a colleague in the foreign policy community that Baker's speech—endorsing *perestroika* and offering technical assistance to help it succeed—constituted "appeasement." The foreign policy pro got the strong impression that Quayle's staffer was repeating things he'd heard from the veep's top advisers. Another Quayle aide was quoted in the *Washington Times* as saying that the Baker-Quayle speeches constituted a "good-cop, bad-cop" approach to the Russians, but also said that Quayle's speech—which covered the "darker side" of recent Soviet behavior—was a "direct rebuttal" to Baker's speech the day before in New York.

These secondhand jabs are of a piece with other noises coming out of Quayle's ideological camp, which suggest Baker might negotiate a START treaty that makes it impossible ever to test and deploy SDI; he might strike a deal with the Soviets to cut off arms from both sides in the Afghan civil war, depriving the *mujaheddin* of victory; and the United States might end up agreeing to allow Vietnam's ally, Hun Sen, stay in power in Cambodia. Another barb is that Baker might have scheduled his big Soviet speech to draw attention away from his failures in the Middle East and Central America.

So far there is only one area in which Quayle's coideologists have any concrete grounds for complaint: Nicaragua, where the bipartisan agreement that Baker worked out with Congress seems to have been, as one conservative put it, a "death knell for the *contras*." Except on the far-far right, though, there's little anger at Baker over this, just resignation. As Burton Yale Pines of the Heritage Foundation put it, "If Ronald Reagan couldn't get a national consensus behind the *contras*, no one could." The right neglects to observe that Baker's electoral policy (which Quayle supports) might have a better chance of ousting the Sandinistas than the *contras* ever did.

Quayle himself denies having any doubts about Baker, and Quayle aides say—correctly—that it would be "suicide" for them to bad-mouth the Secretary of State. On the October 6 edition of the PBS show "American Interests," Quayle told me: "Of course I trust Jim Baker, and the President trusts Jim Baker, and he's a good Secretary of State, and if my conservative friends are [criticizing Baker] . . . I'll guarantee—not only to conservatives, but to anybody else that has any question—his toughness and loyalty to the President is without question." He also said, "There is no problem whatsoever with Dan Quayle and Jim Baker. We have always been good friends. We're still good friends, and we're both loyal people to the President."

Well, as both Baker and Quayle aides will tell you, the truth is that they are not "good friends." Baker is widely thought to have been unhappy with Quayle's selection as Bush's running mate. Baker, as Bush's 1988 campaign manager, was at least partly responsible for Quayle's being kept on a tight leash. Baker may not have inspired the potshots taken at Quayle from inside the campaign, but he certainly didn't stop them. Quayle told me that he and Baker have "had conversations" about 1988 and that "that's all in the past tense . . . there's no problem."

Quayle refused to get into any "cocktail gossip" about the 1992 veep nomination or what naturally proceeds from it, the 1996 Presidential nomination. But that doesn't make it less interesting for us now. Quayle and company know full well that if Quayle gets to stay on the ticket in 1992, he'll be the Republican front-runner for 1996, assuming that he works hard for the party (which he's doing), grows in office (which he's trying to do, making serious trips to Latin America and Asia), and doesn't stumble badly (which may take some work yet).

Baker's spokeswoman, Margaret Tutwiler, says that Baker "has said on the record, 'No, I don't want to be President.' " But they all say that when the action is still some years away. If Baker does want it, he might get his best friend, Bush, to bounce Quayle in 1992 and put him on the ticket. But he'd be stepping down to a less substantive job (unless he were both Secretary of State and Vice President, which is unlikely), and the Republicans would have to be guaranteed a sufficiently big victory so that Baker wouldn't need Texas's electoral votes. (The constitutional rule is that a state's electors can't vote for both a President and Vice President from their state.) Bush could tell the truth and change his official residence to Kennebunkport, but that's not likely, either; Texas has more electoral votes.

Most likely, Baker would be better off if Bush kept Quayle in 1992 and Quayle proved a weak candidate in 1996. If Quayle got replaced by someone strong—say, Dick Cheney, Bill Bennett, or Jack Kemp—Baker's chances for 1996 would be diminished; the replacement veep would be front-runner, ahead of Baker. Of course, if the replacement were someone weaker, say Labor Secretary Elizabeth Dole, then Baker might have a better shot at mounting a challenge.

Meanwhile, Quayle and his friends would be wise to avoid getting into a public fight with Baker. People who take on Baker tend to regret it; sometimes they end up as political corpses. Baker first beat out Ed Meese for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

power in the Reagan White House. Then he beat back national security adviser William Clark. And then, as Treasury Secretary, he outdistanced all others as Reagan's chief economic (and foreign economic) policy-maker. The last person to get in Baker's way was C. Everett Briggs, the hard-line former Ambassador to Honduras who until last month was the director of Latin America affairs at the National Security Council. Briggs let it be known he thought that Baker's State Department had botched it in allowing the Presidents of Central American countries to agree to early dismantlement of the *contras*. Briggs is now gone.

So far Quayle and Baker have never clashed in a National Security Council meeting or other forum. One high-ranking Pentagon official who attends such sessions said he does not even detect tension between them. "In the Reagan days, when George Shultz or Cap Weinberger began to speak, the other would start shifting in his chair. That doesn't happen with these two." It isn't because Quayle says nothing, either. Unlike Bush in his days as Vice President, Quayle does pipe up in strategy sessions.

The idea that Quayle and Baker were playing good-cop, bad-cop with the Soviets isn't right, either. Their speeches were not coordinated. In fact, so far as their top staffs know, neither man knew that the other was giving a speech on Soviet policy. If you were a Soviet leader and read the two speeches, though, you'd probably get just the kind of message that Bush might want to convey: that the United States, in Teddy Roosevelt's words, hopes for the best, is prepared for the worst, and is ready for anything.

Baker said anew that this Administration really does want *perestroika* and *glasnost* to succeed. Quayle, on the other hand, said that the Soviets still have a long way to go to demonstrate that they want a more peaceful world and that "the United States does not pin its hopes on one man or one group of men." Tiananmen Square, he noted, proves that reform in a Communist country "is neither inevitable nor irreversible."

Carefully read, each speech had elements of the other in it. Quayle acknowledged that "amazing changes" were occurring in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and noted that "President Bush has stated time and again that we want to see this process . . . succeed." However, he dwelled at length on Soviet misbehavior, such as resupply of advanced arms to North Korea and Afghanistan, and continuation of East bloc arms aid to Nicaragua. Baker mentioned some of this too, but concentrated on the idea that it was in both the Soviet and American interest that the reform process succeed.

News accounts tended to leave out caveats in the Baker speech, and perhaps magnify Baker's enthusiasm for Gorbachev. The *New York Times* interpreted Baker as saying that Gorbachev's success was "a fundamental American interest." Baker actually said that the United States wants *perestroika* to succeed "because it promises Soviet actions more advantageous to our interests."

Some conservatives chafed at Baker's comment that "it is not our purpose to exploit the movement toward freedom [in Eastern Europe] to harm the security of the Soviet Union." They said this sounded like resurrection of the 1975 Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, widely interpreted by the right as Henry Kissinger's plan to keep Europe stable by letting Moscow hold on to Eastern Europe forever. In context, it's clear that Baker meant to say that the United States would not encourage violence in Eastern Europe. At the same time, though, the United States wants Europe "whole and free," which means the gradual dissolution of Soviet control and the movement of Eastern European countries into the Western European political and economic orbit. Further, the aid that Baker promised Moscow is not money, but advice on how to start banks and institute market pricing, all deeply subversive of communism.

A more important difference in the two speeches may have been Baker's repeated statements that "only political solutions based on national reconciliation can settle" regional conflicts in Angola, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Quayle's emphasis seemed to be not on settlements, but on our side winning. "We will never let other considerations divert us from our fundamental principle: that we stand in support of freedom and democracy," he said.

It would be over one of these regional conflicts that Quayle and Baker might come to blows, or possibly over SDI. If it happens on a genuine matter of principle, so be it. At the moment, though, some of Quayle's allies are trying to build up their man's credibility on the right by disparaging Baker as a potential softy. They ought to quit. We don't know yet how tough Jim Baker can be with the Russians, but in internecine combat within the U.S. Government, he's lethal.

Don Regan's S&L big fix.

NOW IT'S BROKE

By James Ring Adams

"What I like about this job, everybody knows everybody."
—Philip Marlowe in *Farewell, My Lovely*

Baffled by the way the same characters kept popping up in his investigation, detective Marlowe uttered this laconic remark shortly before being half-strangled, pistol-whipped, and shot up with dope. Many bank examiners these days know how he felt. For the last decade, American banking regulation has operated in a film noir atmosphere of corruption and political wirepulling. The latest example is the burgeoning Lincoln

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Savings and Loan scandal, now under scrutiny by Henry Gonzalez's House Banking Committee. Like its parent, the $300 billion savings and loan debacle that helped force House Speaker Jim Wright and Majority Whip Tony Coelho from Congress, the Lincoln scandal threatens to cut short the political careers of several Senators. And its tentacles reach back to the Reagan White House, where former Chief of Staff Donald Regan is implicated in obstructing regulators trying to do their job.

The leading villain in the case is Charles H. Keating Jr., the owner of Lincoln, a beanpole of a man with piercing blue eyes and an innocent smile that reinforces his air of self-righteousness. Keating believes in buying political influence with campaign contributions, and in using his elected friends to advance a variety of causes. These crusades have ranged from a national fight against pornography to the pumping of Arizona groundwater for his real estate developments to a running feud with regulators who thought he was driving his Lincoln S&L into the ground. Gonzalez's hearings are exploring the protection Keating bought for his California-chartered thrift.

Gonzalez will probe very gingerly, since the careers of five U.S. Senators are on the line. Democrats Alan Cranston of California, John Glenn of Ohio, and Don Riegle of Michigan (now chairman of the Senate Banking Committee), as well as Democrat Dennis DeConcini and Republican John McCain, the two Senators from Arizona (where Keating has his real estate and his corporate headquarters), have already been embarrassed by the burgeoning scandal. All five received tens of thousands in contributions from Keating, and Cranston solicited an extra $850,000 for non-profit voter registration drives that helped his narrow re-election in 1986.

In early 1987, when federal regulators in the San Francisco office recommended that their superiors in Washington close down Lincoln, they were summoned 3,000 miles to DeConcini's Capitol Hill office. The Gonzalez hearings should explain how this meeting with the five Senators resulted in a two-year delay in closing Lincoln. During this interval, the S&L lost $1 billion in bad loans and sold some $255 million in uninsured "junk notes" to 23,000 mainly elderly depositors, constituents of Cranston and DeConcini, who will probably never see their money again. The government has now slapped Keating with a $1.1 billion civil fraud suit. The failure of Lincoln is expected to cost the federal deposit insurance fund for S&Ls a total of $2.5 billion, a new record.

This debacle is a microcosm of the larger savings and loan fiasco. The vast bulk of the $300 billion needed to clean up the thrift industry will pay for the delay in closing down corrupt bank managers like Keating. This postponement was the simple product of political influence. The Texas "high flyers," a clique of shady characters who looted 40 or more S&Ls chartered by the Lone Star state, got former Speaker Wright to drive the federal deposit insurance fund into bankruptcy so that regulators wouldn't have the money to liquidate their thrifts. The Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, FSLIC, is now technically around $50 billion in the red—real losses are much higher—and will be replaced under this summer's rescue legislation by an entirely new fund.

Don Ray Dixon, owner of the Vernon Savings and Loan, is typical of the Texas bunch. Dixon is accused of taking millions from his thrift to support a fleet of antique autos, a $2 million beach house in California, and "gastronomique fantastique" tours of France. He put his yacht *High Spirits* at the disposal of Coelho's Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and called on Wright to prevent FSLIC's seizure of his thrift. When the regulators finally did close Vernon, it was $1.3 billion in the red, with a staggering 96 percent of its loans in default.

In the Lincoln case, the Texas crew (all major contributors to Wright's House Democrats) proved to be oddly friendly with arch-Republican Keating and his henchmen. The evidence indicates that they worked together in an outrageous attempt to take control of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB). Modeled on the Federal Reserve (although some might call it a parody), this three-member board supervised the 12 regional home loan banks, which in turn oversaw the thrifts in their districts. The board was dissolved this summer by the Congressional act that financed the S&L bailout, and its regulatory duties were turned over to the Treasury Department. In late 1986, as the S&L crisis was coming into the open, Keating used his ties with White House Chief of Staff Don Regan to place his own man on the board, and the Texas high flyers came close to controlling the second seat. This coup would have given the industry's predators near control over their own regulators.

The main barrier to the coup was the unlikely figure of Edwin J. Gray, who had worked for Ronald Reagan as a press secretary in California and during the 1980 campaign, and who served a stormy four years as chairman of the FHLBB from 1983 to 1987. Although Gray publicly warned as early as 1983 about the impending S&L disaster, Wright and the five Senators bullied him into keeping his regulators from closing thrifts that he said during extensive interviews he knew should have been closed. But these indignities pale in his memory next to his running fight with Chief of Staff Regan. Gray dates his fight with Regan to the Bank Board's attempt in 1983 to limit brokered deposits—$100,000 parcels of investors' money that earned a high rate of interest while retaining federal insurance protection. This new investment vehicle was the source of enormous funds flowing to the "high-flying" thrifts. Merrill Lynch happened to be the leading player in brokered deposits, having placed more than $750 million in troubled banks. Before becoming Treasury Secretary in 1981,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Regan had been the chairman of Merrill Lynch.

Gray blames Regan for rejecting his urgent pleas for more examiners and for trying to force his resignation. The feud reached its destructive peak in the fall of 1986, when FSLIC was $7 billion in the red, regulators were seizing hundreds of S&Ls, and fraud was turning up in most of the failures. Two of the three members on the Bank Board had resigned. As the only member left, Gray lacked a quorum for all essential business, including the closing of bankrupt thrifts. Gray accuses Regan of ignoring frantic requests to fill the vacancies. When Regan did finally search for appointments, he came up with names guaranteed to spite Gray.

Some insight into Regan's appointments comes from Lawrence W. Taggart, California's savings and loan commissioner from 1983 to 1984. Taggart had implemented California's superliberal thrift deregulation, granting more than 200 charters that FSLIC refused to insure. Once a good friend of Gray's, by 1986 he was a bitter enemy. On August 4, 1986, Taggart wrote a seven-page single-spaced letter to Don Regan, vehemently attacking Gray as a "re-regulator." Gray's actions, wrote Taggart, "are likely to have a very adverse impact on the ability of our Party to raise needed campaign funds in the upcoming elections. Many who have been very supportive of the Administration are involved with savings and loan associations which are either being closed by the FHLBB, or threatened with closure."

The California ex-commissioner urged Regan to end Gray's "monarchist agency" by filling the two vacancies with people who "would support the President's position of free enterprise and entrepreneurship." Both Keating and the Texas high flyers had a hand in Taggart's letter. Shortly after announcing his resignation in November 1984, and stating his plans to join TCS Financial Inc., a San Diego consulting firm, Taggart authorized an application by Lincoln S&L to make $800 million in risky direct investments such as junk bonds. In January 1985 Lincoln invested nearly $3 million in TCS, wiping out the debt of the financially ailing firm. For his first year with TCS, Taggart concentrated on consulting for Texas thrifts. One of his main clients was Don Dixon's Vernon Savings and Loan, which also gave Taggart a loan of $685,000. Taggart was on Dixon's payroll when he wrote Regan.

In the letter, Taggart endorsed two unnamed individuals for the board who had already been proposed to Regan. One of them worked for Keating; the other worked for Dixon. Dixon's was an Austin fixture named Durward Curlee, the lobbyist and chief spokesman for the Texas high flyers. The affable Curlee, who had received more than $400,000 in loans from Dixon's Vernon S&L, confirms that he was interviewed for the post, with the support of Republican Senator Phil Gramm, but that he stepped aside when the name of George J. Benston, then a professor at the University of Rochester, came up.

Earlier in 1985 Benston, a respected free marketeer who advocates total bank deregulation, took a major consulting contract from Keating. Benston produced a paper opposing the Bank Board's attempts to limit direct investments by savings and loans. (Keating hired another consultant to review the same project, Alan Greenspan, now chairman of the Federal Reserve.) Benston's views were too extreme for Senator William Proxmire's Banking Committee, and he was dropped in favor of a less controversial academic, New York University Professor Lawrence White.

The other appointment caused real trouble. The seat went to an Atlanta realtor and tax lawyer named Lee Henkel. Henkel, it turned out, had invested in projects that had borrowed more than $60 million from Lincoln Savings and Loan. Keating told the *Wall Street Journal* in July that he won the Bank Board seat for Henkel, "with Don Regan being the main guy that we lobbied." All in all, Regan, who never returned Gray's phone calls, spent more time working on behalf of the corrupt S&L owners than he did on behalf of the regulators who were trying to protect the public.

Henkel's first meeting on the Bank Board took up the direct investment rule that Keating had already hired Benston and Greenspan to attack. Henkel proposed a substitute that Bank Board lawyers say would have exempted just two thrifts. One was Keating's Lincoln S&L. The other was San Jacinto Savings and Loan of Houston, which had close business ties with both Dixon's Vernon and Keating's Lincoln.

The motion to exempt Keating's thrift failed, but the furor it caused dogged Henkel through his brief term on the board. The Bank Board's general counsel, after an unenthusiastic investigation, didn't find any impropriety, which allowed Henkel to claim "exoneration." But the Justice Department reopened the case when it learned that Henkel's motion might have benefited his own investments. Faced with a new inquiry and a grilling by Proxmire, Henkel quit in April 1987, six months after his appointment. About a month earlier, tarred by the Iran-*contra* affair, Regan himself had resigned.

In 1987 it seemed that morale at the Bank Board couldn't be lower. Wright was holding the insurance fund hostage, and Keating had demonstrated his ability to reach into the heart of the citadel. But the Gonzalez hearings have shown that things got even worse under Danny Wall, Gray's successor. In the face of a $300 billion loss, Wall bowed to pressure from the five Senators, took the Lincoln case out of the hands of his most capable examiners, and gave Keating two more years to squander other people's money.

Watch these hearings closely and imagine yourself in the position of an examiner trying to do his job. You realize that everybody knows everybody, and suddenly you're pistol-whipped, strangled, and pulled from the job. When you wake, it will be with a groggy understanding of the magnitude of the S&L nightmare.

JAMES RING ADAMS is the author of *The Big Fix: Inside the S&L Scandal* (Wiley).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SAVING AMERICA'S BABIES

By Ann Hulbert

Mayor Marion Barry has called Washington's campaign against infant mortality "the most comprehensive anywhere in the country." The city has introduced free prenatal care and evening hours in public health clinics, a hotline, child care, appointments guaranteed within two weeks of a call. Yet in the first half of 1989 the infant mortality rate here, long among the highest in the country, approached Sri Lanka's. It surged from 23.2 in 1988 to 32.3—more than three times the national rate of ten. (That means ten babies out of 1,000 die before turning one.)

Dr. Reed Tuckson, the D.C. Public Health Commissioner, is frank about these results. Although visits to clinics rose by 22 percent last year, the crack epidemic, AIDS, and other problems among the poorest in the city have dwarfed the campaign's efforts. Keeping clinics open late in the worst neighborhoods has become increasingly dangerous; getting women to come to them has become more difficult. So the emphasis is on a newly aggressive approach, he said at a recent conference. It features the "MOM van, the Maternity Outreach Mobile," which collects women for prenatal appointments, drug treatment, and other help.

Until now a quiet problem, America's high infant mortality rate is suddenly front-page news. Across the country neonatal intensive care units report that their beds are crowded with tiny, unhealthy babies born to drug-abusing mothers. In an unhappy irony, these are precisely the kinds of stories that raise questions about the conventional medical solutions. Over the last half decade or so, children's advocates, health care experts, and politicians have been crusading for "access": to health insurance, to more and better prenatal care, to friendlier doctors and nurses in more convenient settings. The theory has been that as soon as barriers are lifted (one in four women of childbearing age isn't covered for maternity care), women will go to doctors earlier and more often and have healthier babies.

But this confidence in what might be called supply-side medical solutions has faltered lately. At last people are talking openly about the daunting social dimensions of the problem as well. America's infant mortality rate is as high as it is (it ranks 18th among developed countries) because the rates among the poor, especially blacks, are truly dismal. The black rate is 17.9, twice the white rate; in the poorest inner cities across the country, babies are dying almost as often as they do in Washington. As Tuckson said: "We are losing [the fight] . . . because [it] . . . is a fight against . . . a larger set of very complicated, very deeply rooted issues that are ingrained in the American experience; and, particularly . . . in the experience of people of color in this country."

Framing the issue this way is obviously unsettling. It raises doubt about the old faith in access. In the case of troubled women who need care most, Tuckson worried that even friendlier staffs in more convenient clinics would be left "twiddling [their] thumbs waiting. 'Hey, we are open. We have extended hours. Everything is here. Where is everybody?' " This new skepticism may sound like grounds for inaction, but is in fact an important step forward: an overoptimistic medical campaign is becoming a more sober social rescue effort. "Access" now includes MOM vans and other special efforts to seek out pregnant women. For those most likely to have low birthweight babies (under 5.5 pounds, 20 times more likely to die in their first year than bigger newborns), "prenatal care" now means drug treatment and other social support, not just regular obstetrical visits. It's good the campaign is coming out of the doctor's office, because the real crisis is elsewhere.

Even before crack, the promise of standard prenatal care as a dramatic cure for infant mortality was overrated. Between the mid-1960s and early 1980s, the infant mortality rate dropped by half. But wider participation in prenatal care wasn't the cause of that success—even if it looked as though it was. The infant mortality rate was improving just when prenatal care was improving, thanks to an array of programs designed to help poor pregnant women, mothers, and children—Medicaid; the Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant; the Migrant and Rural Health Centers and Community Health Centers; and the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). But a second look shows that the drop in infant mortality was *not* matched by a comparable decrease in the low birthweight rate, the goal of prenatal care. The impressive drop was due largely to better medical technology able to save smaller babies. As the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

technology reached limits, the infant mortality rate hit a plateau.

Ordinary, preventive obstetrical care alone—monitoring the progress of a pregnancy, and advising on nutrition, hygiene, and general health habits—can't solve the many problems that put the poorest women at risk of having low birthweight babies. In its recent report, the U.S. Public Health Service Expert Panel on the Content of Prenatal Care called for non-medical care for women at highest risk: they need additional help with "psychological or social problems." (At the same time, the old medical myopia was still in evidence in a sweeping new prescription—a "preconception visit" for all women, hardly useful for the riskiest group, whose pregnancies are rarely planned.)

Unfortunately, those in greatest need of extensive help are also the hardest to reach. The women most likely to bear low birthweight babies are disproportionately teenaged, poor, ill-educated, black, and unmarried (infant mortality correlates especially closely with illegitimacy)—and drug abusers. Pregnant women on drugs (most of whom use more than one, and drink alcohol too) are the most obvious case of elusive patients; some studies suggest that they account for a third of the pregnant women who get insufficient or no care. "A person who is addicted to drugs has another priority. The unborn child is not a priority," one social worker in D.C. explained to the *Washington Post*.

Teenagers, the other obvious focus of an aggressive campaign against infant mortality, often deny their pregnancies for months, have unhealthy eating and other habits, and are among the least conscientious patients. The less educated the mother, the less likely she is to think that prenatal care is important. In a survey of teenagers in Hartford, where prenatal care is free for residents, only a third saw doctors in their first trimester.

The question is no longer where to start in tackling infant mortality. The rallying cry has long been to expand insurance coverage, and now Congress has begun to respond, as have the states. Medicaid eligibility has been broadened over the past several years, an important step in dealing with the health care crisis in the United States (which, unlike most other developed countries, fails to provide universal coverage). Congress has separated Medicaid from AFDC and required that states cover pregnant women and children up to 100 percent of the poverty line by July 1990. It has also proposed other sensible reforms, such as simplifying the application process and instituting presumptive eligibility (which allows a pregnant woman to get care while her application is pending).

But now it's clear that these changes by themselves aren't a cure-all, and the next steps are far less obvious. Further expansion (to cover the near poor, as Congress has suggested) won't do much for the poorest women with the riskiest pregnancies. Most of them are already eligible for Medicaid, and for the other maternal and child health programs in place since the 1960s. What's needed is some way to connect available programs with the women who need them most, and the trouble is that, as Ian Hill of the National Governors' Association observed, "Medicaid is not a service delivery program; it is a financing program." It is better to have Medicaid than not, but the record for care isn't great. Only 40 percent of Medicaid women got early prenatal attention, according to one study, compared with 85 percent of women with private insurance.

Having money for care clearly doesn't translate directly into getting care. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, which two years ago produced the most frequently cited report on financing maternity care in the United States, is about to issue a report on the availability of services across the country, and the findings are going to be discouraging. Thanks to soaring malpractice insurance rates and fewer obstetricians willing to take Medicaid patients (roughly four in ten won't), the pool of doctors has shrunk. And drug treatment programs have been a rarity all along.

One popular answer to the doctor shortage is to raise Medicaid payments to doctors. Unfortunately, that isn't likely to do much for the poorest women, at least in the inner cities. Most office-based doctors there already take Medicaid patients (often too many of them), and higher fees alone probably aren't enough to induce more private doctors to relocate in the ghettos. In any case, it's not clear that more private offices are what's needed. In those inner-city neighborhoods, and in rural areas, most women rely on community clinics, and such non-mainstream care makes sense. For 20 years the Community and Migrant Health Centers and other programs and clinics run by the state-administered Maternal and Child Health program have been trying to offer not merely medical attention but precisely the kind of nutritional, social, and psychological help that standard care doesn't aim to provide.

Those clinics, relatively well distributed and well used (they provide prenatal care to four out of ten of the half million teenagers and the one million poor women who give birth every year), are the obvious starting place for improvements. Raising Medicaid reimbursements will help the community and migrant clinics some, since roughly a quarter of their prenatal patients are covered by the program. Here too, however, money doesn't automatically guarantee greater effectiveness. WIC, which has strong bipartisan support in Congress, was recently boosted $118 million to $2.13 billion. But in New York, where WIC was suddenly flush in 1986 (thanks to cost containment), the program has had trouble drawing more women and children to use that money; WIC reaches only about 40 percent of those eligible there. "We work hard to put them on the program," according to a WIC administrator in D.C., another city where the nutritional services are reaching fewer who need them, "but many women are not picking up their checks."

The Community and Migrant Health Centers have faced similar difficulties. Inadequate facilities are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

often the problem, especially in rural areas. But the issue sometimes isn't simply one of availability, as the Community Service Society suggested in a survey of 12 health center districts in New York with the worst birth statistics. "The reasons for the underutilization of prenatal care are not immediately evident," the report admitted, "since prenatal care is available in a variety of public and private health facilities in or close to most low-income districts in the city." A recent $20 million federal grant, part of an "infant mortality reduction initiative," has allowed the Community and Migrant Health Centers to emphasize more intensive "case management" to get women into care early and keep them.

The situation varies widely across the country, but lack of "outreach" and of coordination are the familiar culprits. (In New York, for example, very few women are referred to WIC by other social service programs.) These days those buzzwords are being taken literally by the experts, especially by the most prominent among them, the two-year-old National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality, legislated and supported by both parties in Congress. Its Healthy Birth Act features a "one-stop shopping" plan that calls not just for better referrals but for services set up side by side: Medicaid, Title V programs, Community and Migrant Health Centers, WIC, social and welfare services, drug programs, mental health services, educational programs, all in one place. Cheek by jowl, WIC and the welfare department couldn't ignore each other—and a young mother could easily get to both. The commission also urges home visiting, a regular one-on-one relationship between a pregnant woman and a nurse or community woman before and after her baby's birth.

This marks a radical step beyond the old expectation that the women most in need will simply come if the services are there. Inevitably, a paternalistic intrusiveness is an inherent part of the more comprehensive programs, which aim in effect to play the role of an ideal father of a woman's baby, or of a full and healthy family: to be a provider of all kinds of practical help, and a source of the "watchful concern/protection" that the Expert Panel on Prenatal Care defines as the heart of prenatal care. This paternalism may seem old-fashioned, but especially when it comes to teenagers and drug abusers, it isn't misplaced. Assertive guidance shouldn't be hard to justify for women so ill-equipped to protect their babies.

Too often, however, it is. In its handbook on home visiting, the National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality is lightly mocking about the style of home care in the 19th century, when "a healthy dose of moral counsel was given along with tangible relief such as food and clothing." But as Reed Tuckson emphasized, there has to be a moral goal. "Nothing we do in this room will work," he told the gathering of experts, "unless we get people to believe and understand their own individual responsibility." That doesn't mean stinting on help. On the contrary, he persuasively argued that the current vogue of treating pregnant addicts as criminals is pointlessly punitive. Rather than scaring away already elusive patients with the specter of jail, it's worth trying drug treatment, not least since no one really has yet: it's next to impossible for a pregnant addict to find a program willing to take her.

No one pretends to be sure just what such a program should entail, but responsibility for the fetus is the starting point: the mother's enforced withdrawal from drugs, to give her baby the chance of at least a few months in a non-toxic womb. Of course, this doesn't begin to answer the question of what happens after the baby's birth. With drug programs and foster care in disarray, it may be, as Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and others have suggested, worth reviving the small orphanage, a place where some of the next generation might be rescued from impossibly difficult lives. And certainly one central goal of any regimen of treatment should be to avoid another pregnancy.

That should also be the principal message to teenagers. In striving to reach women early enough to urge proper care even before conception, the more comprehensive prenatal programs can lose sight of the real goal: persuading teenagers not to get pregnant in the first place. It is an argument for more support for school clinics. An easier task should be preventing the all too common second pregnancy: 40 percent of girls who have a baby before they turn 18 have a second baby within three years. The successful patients in projects like the Program to Reduce Obstetrical Problems and Prematurity, run by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, have often found their way there precisely because they've been pregnant before. They are praised for their healthier, safer second pregnancies, when the best, safest, cheapest assistance they could have is in postponing that pregnancy. For teenagers who do get pregnant, making comprehensive prenatal care a condition of receiving benefits after the birth of their babies might well give those babies a better chance, at least at the very start.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute closed its 1987 report, "Blessed Events and the Bottom Line: Financing Maternity Care in the United States," with an indignant call to action that sounds sadly irrelevant to the problem at hand: "Certainly, it is unconscionable that we as a society appear to care so little for the next generation that we cause couples to hesitate about having a baby for fear they can't afford proper medical care, and place obstacles in the way of pregnant women who seek and need such care." The real infant mortality problem lies elsewhere. We do want teenagers and women on drugs to hesitate about having a baby. And helping those who end up pregnant have healthier babies is more than a matter of removing obstacles. It takes stamina. "We'll bird-dog them daily if we have to," said an administrator at Constant Care, a community health center in the heart of Baltimore, whose patients get a hounding phone call if they break two appointments. The staff know who they're dealing with. "These women need nurture. We need to keep up our surveillance." •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Civilized People and Others

Some of Woody Allen's best writing is in **Crimes and Misdemeanors** (Orion). He has risked trying to write perceptive comments about love and the meaning of existence—most of which are put into the mouth of an old philosopher with a German accent—and without opening any new avenues of thought, he comes off creditably. Which is to say, we believe that an old philosopher might be saying these things. That in itself is an achievement.

Further, Allen has shaken off the stasis of *Another Woman* and the Bergman-mimicking of other films. There is one reminder of *Wild Strawberries* when a mature man visits his Brooklyn boyhood home and intrudes on his family's seder of some 45 years before; but mostly the film is in Allen's comfortable idiom, Manhattan Jews speaking extra-brightly and baring troubles extra-easily.

Once again he has written an important part for himself: this time he's a footling documentary filmmaker, but it's the usual Allen role. Once again he flashes some poetry: this time it's Dickinson instead of Eliot. Once again he has the funniest lines. (His brother-in-law, a TV producer, says that the city is full of straight lines looking for punchlines; maybe they can't find them because Allen has them all.)

Allen is trying fitfully to make a documentary about an old philosopher, played by Martin Bergmann. But chiefly his story is about his unhappy marriage, his dislike of his successful TV brother-in-law, his liking for his rabbi brother-in-law who is going blind, and his attempted romance with another TV producer, Mia Farrow. His failed affair is posed against another man's affair, and that other interwoven story gets equal screen time; but only at a wedding near the end do Allen and that other man meet.

That other story, grim and discomfiting, gives the film its main interest. It's about a successful ophthalmologist (a word frequently mispronounced here) played by Martin Landau. Married and with a grown daughter, he has been having an affair for two years with Anjelica Huston, an unmarried, lonely airline hostess. Huston is desperate to get all of his life; he wants to cut loose from her, to protect his home and status. (Yes, in outline it's a good deal like *Fatal Attraction*.) So in desperation—there's no way to discuss this film without tipping its finish—Landau arranges through his lowlife brother, Jerry Ohrback, to have Huston killed. It all goes off neatly. Landau even returns to Huston's apartment and walks around her body to retrieve letters and pictures before the police arrive. (Question: Wouldn't Ohrbach have wanted to know beforehand if Huston had anything in her apartment that would lead the police to Landau, thus to himself?) Landau is secretly tormented for a while, then readjusts.

Landau is more restrained and genuine in this role than I've ever seen him. Huston is, of course, first-rate as a woman being buffeted in a male world. Farrow is sweet as the TV woman who wants only to be Allen's friend. Alan Alda gleams as the TV producer who can make honest words sound corrupt. Ohrbach never knows quite what to do with his eyes. About Allen's performance, little comment is needed. If you've seen him twice, you know him—a good shtick comic who attempts serious moments.

As a director, however, Allen has developed admirably. For instance, on Landau's first visit to Huston's apartment, Allen tracks him (Sven Nykvist at the camera) from the front door through the small foyer into the small kitchen and then to the living room, underscoring the fact that Landau has moved from his open life into a secret burrow. No question, too, that Allen is now almost always able to evoke confident, resourceful acting from others.

Crimes and Misdemeanors is outstanding among his films because this time Allen the writer has addressed large themes in his own familiar, manageable mode, not imitatively. Yet those themes ultimately don't quite register, because of the script's structure.

All of a sudden, with no slightest previous hint, Farrow appears at that wedding, hooked up with Alda, and Allen is crushed. Farrow's action is meant to show the irrationality of love versus personal worth, but it's tacked on so arbitrarily that it seems the author's intervention rather than a bitter vagary of fate.

Even more muffled is the end of Landau's story. He has been tormented by guilt. Then, when he appears at that wedding, he finds a stranger (Allen) sitting alone and tells him that something

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Do the Right Thing. *Disturbing but not to be missed. An ordinary day and terrible night on a black street in Brooklyn. Written and directed by the gifted Spike Lee, who also plays a leading role. (Reviewed 7/3/89)* **High Fidelity.** *A lovely documentary about the Guarneri Quartet. Not a concert film: the film accompanies the four men as they travel, rehearse, live, perform. Directed by Allan Miller, himself a schooled musician. (9/18&25/89)* **sex, lies, and videotape.** *Steven Soderbergh's exceptional sensitivity makes this inquiry into the sexual ambience of four young people a delicate, haunting experience. (9/4/89)* **When Harry Met Sally . . . .** *Visual candy. Aural, too. Bright stuff about Manhattan dating. Its chorus of older folks and the old songs on the sound track fix a contrasting earlier attitude toward romance. (8/21/89)* **—SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has been bothering him greatly but that he took his family to Europe for a while and now he feels fine. The theme toward which his story has been building—the realization that *Macbeth* does not apply to everyone, that moral accommodation is easier for "nice" people than we want to believe—occurs off-screen. If Landau's entire story had been handled obliquely, it might have been possible to treat its conclusion this way. But after the explicit dramatization of Landau's life up to this point, this finish seems to be skirting a resolution—perhaps a scene in which Landau realizes that he is going to be able to live with what he has done. As is, the conclusion seems scanted.

Over the other themes arches the main theme of the eye. Represented by the ophthalmologist's profession, by his remembrance of his father's admonition that God's eyes see everywhere always, by the recurrent references to the TV camera, the eye is the film's immanent symbol. Inevitably there's an immanent question: *Are* we being watched? Lucien Goldmann wrote: "Tragedy can be defined as a spectacle under the permanent observation of a deity." Then if there's no permanent observation, there's no tragedy, only chaos. But perhaps it's only mankind's assumption that there is such an ideal as justice, and when the man-made assumption isn't fulfilled, we complain of chaos. This huge theme (not exclusively a modern one by any means) is the apparent apex of Allen's film, and for reasons stated, he doesn't reach it. Still, it is his best and most courageous work to date.

Yaaba (New Yorker) is a simple film whose prime virtue is that it doesn't merchandise its simplicity. This is the second feature-length work by Idrissa Ouédraogo, a 35-year-old native of Burkina Faso, and is set in a village not far from where he was born and brought up. There are no professional actors in the film, yet out of common understanding of these characters and their lives, Ouédraogo and his cast move us.

The principal people are a boy and a girl about 12 who are close friends. She becomes ill, and the boy enlists the aid of an old woman called Yaaba (grandmother in the regional language) to find someone who can cure her. Other events, like a marriage and an extramarital affair, are threaded through.

These people, farmers mostly, live in shacks without floors, eat the plainest of food, and in general live as the *National Geographic* has led us to expect of African villagers. Yet the real texture of the film is not in its story but in the richness of the people, who are as complex and various as villagers anywhere.

MODERNITY AND THE HOLOCAUST

Zygmunt Bauman

"An outstanding . . . interpretation of the Holocaust. . . . [Bauman's] thesis: the Holocaust was a product of modernity's success, not its failure. . . . Bauman pursues this theme relentlessly, as he indicts sociological pretentiousness, projects the Holocaust as an extreme paradigm for modern societal ills, and stresses its significance for humanity. A provocative, even profound, work, this makes for absorbing—and disturbing—reading." —*Library Journal*

"The publication of *Modernity and the Holocaust* is an important event."

—Agnes Heller, New School for Social Research

$29.95

124 Roberts Place/Ithaca, NY 14850

Cornell University Press

His first book in two decades

SHELDON WOLIN

The Presence of the Past

E pluribus unum—out of many, one. But for the Founding Fathers, creating a unified American nation through the Constitution meant suppressing the very diversity they had championed in the Declaration of Independence.

Sheldon Wolin shows how this quiet "second" revolution turned America's democracy into a paradox—universally praised, but dismissed in practice as irrelevant to the business of governing. Tracing the Constitution's anti-democratic legacy, *The Presence of the Past* explains how "We the People" evolved into a mass electorate, encouraged to be politically passive until aroused by media stimulation at election time.

$29.95

Available at your bookstore or call 1-800-537-JHUP

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The contrast between the way they live and their sophistication is healthily surprising.

They have a grace, especially the women, that the director obviously loves, and he takes every chance to let us see their etiquette and bearing. The 90 minutes we spend in this village, under an immense blue sky, beautifully rendered by the cinematographer Matthias Kälin, are enlightening—and are chastening of civilized superiorities.

The strange career of Fiorellism.

The Sorrow and the City

By Joe Klein

"New York became the first great city in history to be ruled by men of the people, not as an isolated phenomenon . . . but as a persisting, established pattern. Almost to this day the men who have run New York City have talked out of the side of their mouths." —Daniel Patrick Moynihan

The paradigm, of course, was Fiorello La Guardia. One imagines the young Moynihan on a Sunday morning in 1940 in the Hell's Kitchen tenement where he lived with his mother, preparing his shine kit for another busy day on West 42nd Street, the radio screeching that terrible, tinny voice: "Ladies, I want to ask you a favor. I want you please to wear your rubbers when you go out in this weather. . . . Now about fish. You should take advantage of the low prices this week and buy fish."

The audiences were prodigious. La Guardia had the highest-rated radio show in New York on Sundays, long before the memorable week that the newspapers went on strike and he read *Dick Tracy* and *Orphan Annie* to the "kiddies." He seemed to live in the city's kitchen, giving shopping tips, selling frugality during the war, blasting his enemies, "the no good, chiseling tinhorns." It is hard now to imagine that a politician could be so well-loved. Fifty years later New Yorkers of a certain age will mist over at the very mention of his name. La Guardia remains not just the nostalgic touchstone for a truly heroic generation, but also the embodiment of the ethnic romance that is at the heart of New York's political mythology: the constant, roiling tumult of new groups coming, struggling, shoving, rising, and moving on.

Fiorellism is New York's municipal religion. It can seem almost cultlike in election years, with each succeeding generation of politicians claiming lineage; the myth is broad and powerful enough that almost anyone can stake a claim. The tide has run especially strong this year. Edward Koch always imagined himself to be La Guardia's natural heir, flaunting the same boisterous, outspoken (obnoxious) style. Rudolph Giuliani reminds voters that La Guardia was also a Republican, a reformer who kicked the corrupt Democrats out of office. David Dinkins, oddly—perhaps not oddly—rarely mentions La Guardia, but he may have the strongest claim of all. If elected, Dinkins, too, will be the first of his tribe to reach City Hall, and he, too, may mark the beginning of a new political cycle in the life of the city. There is an ideological bond as well. La Guardia was among the first of the great welfare state liberals, and Dinkins may be among the last.

Fiorello H. La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York
by Thomas Kessner
(McGraw-Hill, 720 pp., $24.95)

Fiorello La Guardia's victory in 1933 ended 50 years of Irish rule in New York. Tammany was a profoundly Hibernian operation. It was deeply conservative, a just-off-the-boat employment agency. "They never thought of politics as an instrument of social change," Moynihan observed, with Nathan Glazer, in *Beyond the Melting Pot* (still the finest account of New York's ethno-political intricacies). La Guardia's tribe—the southern and eastern Europeans—clearly had a more romantic notion of the system's potential. His administration began a new 50-year cycle, a period dominated by Jewish and Protestant liberal reformers (La Guardia was an Episcopalian) that may now be ending with the probable election of the first non-European Mayor of New York.

It is particularly appropriate, then, that La Guardia's life and record be reexamined at the waning of his era. Thomas Kessner, a professor at City University of New York, struggles mightily against the hagiographic temptations, but eventually (and understandably) he succumbs. His *La Guardia* is a valuable piece of research, certainly the most balanced and complete life of New York's most famous Mayor. It is a surprisingly austere work, however, lacking the resonance, the insight, and the irony that the subject has always demanded, but often has not received.

La Guardia was an Episcopalian? Well, why not? His father was a Catholic from southern Italy; his mother, a Jew from Trieste. They arrived in the United States in 1880, intent on assimilation. Italian would never be spoken in their home; the three children—Fiorello was the second, born in 1882—were raised as Protestants. In Arizona, mostly.

His father, Achille La Guardia, was a cornetist who had difficulty finding work in New York; but the Army was hiring, and he enlisted as a bandmaster. The family moved from post to post: South Dakota, upstate New York, and finally to Prescott, Arizona. As a result, La Guardia fancied himself as something of a cowboy; later he made common cause in Congress with Western progressives like George Norris and careened through the city in a Stetson hat.

The reality was probably a bit less colorful than La Guardia pretended. It was in Prescott that he learned who he was:

> Fiorello was playing with friends one day near home when a strange-looking man came to town leading a red-capped monkey and carrying a hand organ. Passers-by would flip pennies at the man as the kids gathered round, ridiculing the old Italian. "A dago with a monkey!" they screamed. . . . "Hey Fiorello, you're a dago too. Where's your monkey?". . . Early in his first administration, Fiorello would ban organ grinders from the streets of New York.

Kessner's restraint is a bit too admirable here. He gives the official reasons for La Guardia's decision: organ grinders were beggars, they blocked free movement. . . . But, good God, he banned them! How did the Italian community react? What did the *New York Times* think? More important, what did this drastice act—in the depths of the Depression, when there were apple-sellers on most midtown street corners, and music on the street wouldn't have killed anybody—say about the shame and the pride curdling within the little fellow?

We may be, as Mario Cuomo likes to suggest, the sons and daughters of giants, but shame has always festered near the heart of the ethnic experience. ("He's not a real ethnic," said a Boston Irishman about Michael Dukakis. "He

Joe Klein writes about politics for *New York* magazine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was never embarrassed by his father.") For most newcomers of the La Guardian era, the need not just to succeed, but to assimilate produced frantic economic and social energy. More subtly, it was also the cause of a constant, free-floating anxiety, a fear of being found alien. There was always an organ grinder in the closet. La Guardia could be flagrant in his ethnicity, but he was plagued by it as well. He spoke Yiddish—he campaigned in five languages—but he would acknowledge his mother's religion only under duress. In later years he complained to Protestant aides that if only he could look and speak as they did, he might be President. There was a frustrating distance, an emotional austerity, to him, and the immigrant son's lack of irony about himself. He bristled when "Who's Who" called him a "politician" in its 1940 edition: "Its connotation . . . is such that I don't think it ought to be used except for politicians—and there are many of them around. I do not happen to be one of them."

In truth, he was never not a politician. He had a natural constituency from the moment he received his law degree. People named Fiorello La Guardia did not go to Wall Street; they did immigration and labor law. His clientele was inevitable—the newer and messier ethnics, the garlic eaters—and he adopted their cause with an untrammeled passion. In lifting them, he would free himself. He would have to serve them as a Republican, since the Irish controlled Tammany and he wasn't about to wait 20 years to move from the wards to the city council to the state assembly to the pasture. Instead, he plunged ahead, tickled by the quixotic nature of the enterprise. He was given a chance to run for Congress in 1914 because none of the recumbent Protestants who controlled the GOP was feeling sacrificial. He did not campaign as a gentleman. "Any Italo-American who votes the Democratic ticket this year," he promised, "is an Austrian bastard." He lost to a saloon-keeper, but persisted. In 1916 he called the incumbent "dumb, insensitive, disloyal to Ireland and a retailer of tainted whiskey." He won.

La Guardia was distinctive, a national Congressman from the start. No sooner was he seated than he left: war had been declared and he was off to Italy, the commander of an Army air squadron. He became America's "flying Congressman." His men loved him. When they went to Rome on leave, he ordered "portable prophylactic stations to be discreetly wheeled around the red light district by a soldier pushing a baby carriage."

But the acclaim was fleeting. The postwar mood was constricted, nativist; as if the immigrants had brought Europe's war to America's door. They were the true targets of the Palmer raids. And, to a certain extent, it was disgust with the beer- and wine-drinking races that led to Prohibition. La Guardia found himself not merely on the short end of most votes, but an object of scorn. "It goes against the grain of real Americans," the *Denver Post* wrote, "to have anybody by the name of La Guardia telling the American people how to run their government. . . . No state but New York would disgrace itself by sending such a man . . . to Congress."

He courted their disdain, rubbed their noses in his noisy ethnicity. He was always up and screeching on the floor of the House. To protest price-gouging by the meat-packers one day, he began rummaging through his pockets, producing a lamb chop, a steak, and various other cuts far too expensive for the average folks to buy. "Gentlemen, we simply have to eat," he concluded. "We have formed the habit."

The House press corps voted him "the most effective, interesting and picturesque member." That was nice, but it missed the seriousness of purpose—the fury—that never was far from the surface. He railed now against the shameful, restrictive immigration law of 1924, and now against the economic conservatism of Coolidge and Mellon. (The New York GOP found this so distasteful that they dropped him from the slate in 1924; he ran as a socialist—an ideology he considered too optimistic—and won.) He remained an enduring curiosity through the 1920s, the "wop Congressman" (they were freer with ethnic vilifiers in those days), picturesque but not very effective.

FIORELLO LA GUARDIA BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Then, in 1929, the bottom dropped out of the economy, and La Guardia's time had come. He spent the months before the crash in a particularly frustrating pursuit: running for Mayor against Tammany's darling, James J. Walker, who wrote songs, patrolled Broadway, and didn't sweat the details. "A reformer," Walker suggested, "is someone who rides through a sewer in a glass-bottomed boat." Still, Walker couldn't help but appreciate La Guardia: "Fiorello is the cosmopolite of this cosmopolitan city," he said. He could afford to be charitable. The crash came too close to Election Day to have an impact; Walker breezed, and La Guardia returned to Washington.

He had allies now. Soon everyone was hurting, and La Guardia had co-sponsors for his welfare bills. He was cited more than 4,000 times, more than any other member in the records of the 71st and 72nd Congresses. He submitted bills to establish public housing and public works programs, unemployment and bank deposit insurance, government distribution of food, clothing, and coal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Call for any book

• Immediate shipment worldwide. • Credit cards or check. • Ask about our overnight gift delivery nationwide. • Free monthly New Title Forecast. • Mail orders welcome. • Open 24 hours every day. • Write or phone for free holiday catalog.

BOOK CALL

1-800-255-2665

In CT or Worldwide (203) 966-5470

59 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840

A DIFFERENT CONCEPT

We manage Investments for Both Safety & Growth

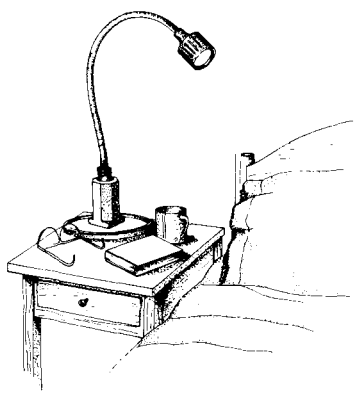
Annualized Return of 19.3% Since 1985

For a free booklet introducing the concept and detailing the strategy, call: (800) 524-4832 N.Y. (212) 944-1166.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Hampton Investors Inc.
42 West 38 Street
New York, N.Y. 10018
YOTAV J. ELIACH
Sr. Vice President

Read in Bed



The Sunnex may be the best light made for reading in bed. Its bright halogen light, recessed in a cool shade, illuminates your page—not your partner. Exceptionally well made. In matte black.

Nightstand Sunnex **$156 + $7.50** ship. (27-inch flexible gooseneck, 8-inch base)
Floor Sunnex **$198 + $9** ship. (55-inch gooseneck, 10-inch base)
Pair Savings **–$10** and use **$9** ship.
Extra Halogen Bulb **$9**

MC/VISA/AMEX/Check
Money-Back Guarantee • Catalog on Request
800-544-0880 or 407-276-4141

LEVENGER
Tools for Serious Readers
975 S. Congress Ave., Code NRM, Delray, FL 33445

Hoover blocked most of his efforts, but he could hurt the administration, too. When the President proposed a new sales tax to remedy the growing federal deficit, La Guardia stood in the House screaming, "Soak the rich, soak the rich!" so loudly and so persistently that it became a national battle cry. Hoover finally backed down. "Not within our time has an individual won such a striking legislative victory," Heywood Broun wrote. As a reward, his constituents swept La Guardia from office in the Roosevelt landslide of 1932.

The Depression was not kind to Tammany. Jimmy Walker's charm wasn't quite so beguiling with hundreds of thousands unemployed in the city and a Hooverville sprouting in Central Park. Judge Samuel Seabury conducted his famed hearings into Tammany corruption—unearthing a series of hilarious felons, the "starving McQuades" and Thomas Farley, who managed to accumulate $400,000 on a salary of $8,500 by saving his pennies in "a little tin box." The aristocratic Seabury told one Tammany heeler, "I find it impossible to raise you to the level of my contempt."

By 1933 Walker was gone as well, forced to resign in disgrace. With Seabury's support, La Guardia won the reluctant backing of a reform coalition—Republicans, assorted progressives, the business community, the better sorts (who had little use for La Guardia's pushy style). He faced a Tammany hack named John Patrick O'Brien and a more attractive independent Democrat named Joseph McKee—who served to peel off some of the monolithic Democratic vote, and elect La Guardia Mayor.

The change was immediate, electric. He seemed to be everywhere—riding off to fires, surprising bureaucrats in their offices, making citizen's arrests, proposing new programs, cleaning up the mess. His administration was dominated by old-line Protestant reform sorts at its highest levels, but it was the sons and the daughters of garlic eaters who took over the agencies, sweeping out the Tammany seat-warmers and setting the new tone. They would still be in place 30 years later, when John Lindsay's whiz-kids sought to dislodge the disdained "Depression geniuses" from their municipal cubbyholes. (The aging whiz-kids are due to be recycled by the Dinkins gang in the 1990s.)

"Breathtaking Activity Replaces Tammany Somnolence," the *World-Telegram* reported as La Guardia began. The activity continued undiminished for the next 12 years, but the novelty of it served a dual purpose in the early days. It was also a cover for desperate negotiations taking place. New York was bankrupt; La Guardia became the first, but not the last, Mayor to turn over the financial affairs of the city to a committee of bankers, who forced him to impose a sales tax, the very measure he'd railed against in Congress.

Reading Kessner's account of La Guardia's early days in office—of the fiscal crisis, of the smart-mouthed, peripatetic style that roused the city—it is difficult not to be reminded of Koch's early triumphs and travails. There are striking similarities between the La Guardia and Koch administrations, but there is one monumental difference: La Guardia came to power with the assumption that government could *cure* poverty. He saw welfare as a means to launch the downtrodden into the middle class, and saw public housing as the "solution" to the slums. Koch, of course, couldn't have the luxury of such delusions. Nor did he have the ally in Washington that La Guardia had.

Within three weeks of his election, La Guardia won a pledge from Franklin Roosevelt for more than 200,000 public works jobs for the city. Throughout his first term, La Guardia was more successful than any other local official in the country in winning New Deal funding and support. He and Roosevelt seemed to share a brain trust—Adolf Berle and Rexford Tugwell, among others (Harold Ickes might as well have worked for La Guardia, given the time he spent on New York)—and the city became the place where new ideas were tried first. A great deal of emotional energy was put into public housing: "On the grounds was [sic] a kindergarten, a nursery (where new mothers were given lessons in baby care), a day care center, and communal meeting rooms." The Housing Authority sent rent collectors who doubled as social workers around every few weeks to see if anyone needed help. (That was unlikely, since "troubled" families were not accepted in public housing; nor were blacks, at first.)

At the core of La Guardia's welfare state liberalism was a faith in "progress" that seems archaic now. It was the faith that spawned his memorable 1939 World's Fair, and the myriad of grand public works that he—and Robert Moses, his Parks Commissioner—initiated: bridges, tunnels, parkways, subways, airports—most of which were made possible by the New Deal, and any of which would seem impossibly ambitious 50 years later. Call it vision, or a sense of civic romance—but it is a quality that seems to have vanished from American public life, leaving a dull vestigial twitch in its place, an inchoate yearning for higher purpose. (For Moses, who sur-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vived in power long after La Guardia, the "romance" became a mania. It destroyed broad swaths of the cityscape, and eventually helped discredit the very notion of grand public works.)

The first term was La Guardia's best. The arc of his career mirrors Koch's almost perfectly: a brilliant start, national acclaim, the delusion of upward mobility (for Koch, a run for governor; for La Guardia, dreams of the presidency or the Cabinet), then boredom, a waning interest in the continual battle, a growing bitterness, and, finally, utter alienation.

La Guardia never fell quite so far as Koch. He didn't try to run for a fourth term, but his third was a cynical, exhausted disaster. He lost most of the good government types with his abrasive style, which turned vindictive and crazed as he grew more bored. He became more tolerant of petty corruption (he even hired Jimmy Walker for a ceremonial job), he began to use his Department of Investigations to bludgeon his enemies. The city waned, and turned combustible. There was a terrifying, deadly riot in Harlem in 1943. Adam Clayton Powell advised his black constituency to arm themselves in defense against La Guardia's police and called the Mayor "one of the most pathetic figures on the current American scene." (One of Powell's protégés, a child preacher named Al Sharpton, later would abuse Koch with similar invective.)

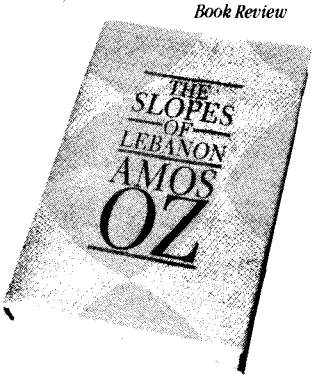
La Guardia never quite lost his liberalism. Leaving office in 1945, he went to work for the United Nations' postwar relief agency. He sought help for all the war's victims, even those in nations within the Russian orbit. But he didn't last very long out of office; he died of cancer within two years, on September 20, 1947.

The next Mayor of New York was a fellow named O'Dwyer, who was forced to find sanctuary in Mexico before his first term expired. Soon the La Guardia coalition—that curious amalgam of idealists, the business establishment, and the downtrodden—reassembled; and it has pretty much run the town ever since. There is an ironic twist, one that has become all too familiar to Democrats across the country: much of La Guardia's original constituency has gone over to the other side, joining the Irish in middle-class resentment against the dominant rich and the poor. The divisions became particularly stark in the Lindsay years, when blacks grew more aggressive in the pursuit of political power (in the form of "community control") and liberals seemed to countenance their every whim. It remains the essential fault line of New York politics to this day.

What will Israel's future be?

Amos Oz examines his native land, a nation in turmoil.

"His voice is rich, passionate, committed, febrile, intellectual." —*New York Times Book Review*



Translated by Maurie Goldberg-Bartura
A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book

HBJ
HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH

THE NEW REPUBLIC
POLO SHIRT

The New Republic is proud to present the ultimate fashion statement: The New Republic polo shirt. Fashioned out of 100% cotton and custom embroidered with our attractive new logo, The New Republic polo will become the staple of your casual wardrobe. It also makes the perfect gift for TNR aficionados on your shopping list. The New Republic polo is available in crisp white with the logo embroidered in navy blue, in adult sizes, small, medium, large and extra large. Only $24.50 per shirt plus $1.25 per shirt for shipping. Satisfaction guaranteed! Order yours today.

To: THE NEW REPUBLIC POLO SHIRT OFFER, 1220 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036

Please send me _____ polo shirt(s) in size(s) _____.

I have enclosed a check/money order in the amount of _____ to cover the cost of the shirt ($24.50 each) plus shipping ($1.25 each) plus applicable sales tax (D.C. Residents add 6%.) My address is:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Koch, who *thought* out of the side of his mouth, effected a temporary realignment; he was a reformer, but a Potemkin liberal. His was a coalition of the business community, more moderate reform factions, and the people whose parents had voted for La Guardia—the outer borough Jews, Irish, and Italians. He was a superb manager, especially in the early years, and a superb cheerleader, but he lacked La Guardia's sense of urban romance. There will be no airports named for Koch.

At the end, there was exhaustion, too. The welfare bureaucracies, born in the La Guardia era, were helpless in the face of a new, more desperate, and more complicated form of poverty—one that was born, in part, in the dependency that the system itself engendered. The liberal machinery has been unable to respond to changing circumstances. A quarter century's worth of restrictive work rules have been won by the municipal labor unions, crippling the potential for spontaneity and pragmatic idealism that marked the early La Guardia era. It has been ten years since a school principal was fired in the city; each now has tenure for life in his or her building after three years on the job, regardless of performance. Of 62,000 schoolteachers, only two were dismissed last year. There are 250,000 public employees in New York, and they carry disproportionate weight in municipal elections.

If the welfare state seems as corroded and archaic as Tammany did when La Guardia took over, there's been very little thought—nationally, much less locally—about how to renovate the public institutions of compassion to address the social disintegration that has transformed the nature of poverty. In New York, a new non-European era of governance may well combine the worst aspects of the last two cycles: a continuing faith in the tired institutions of the liberal reform era *and* a return to the Tammany spoils system. (The latter will take place under the guise of affirmative action.) The new Mayor will face more prosaic difficulties, too: a large budget deficit, a flat economy, another round of labor negotiations, plus the old standbys, crime and drugs. More than 10,000 cocaine-addicted women will give birth in New York this year; the word on the street is that crack eases labor pains.

But then it has always been easy to wax cataclysmic about New York. The city teeters eternally on the brink of anarchy or bankruptcy or profligacy. But it has always managed to survive, not least because of the strength of the very tensions that make it so impossible—the pride and the shame that drive each new ascendant group. There is a surge that comes with each rebirth, and the election of even so mild a man as David Dinkins—who, at his best, has shown only a wisp of La Guardia's freshness, rigor, and acuity—may release new energy.

Several weeks ago, Dinkins addressed an audience of black high school students in Brooklyn: "I know you face obstacles. I know there are barriers," he told them.

> I know that we—the adults—have not done all we should, and all we must, to make this city all it can be. And I pledge to you that I will do my part as your next Mayor.
>
> But I want a pledge—in turn—from you. A pledge that you will never use those obstacles and barriers as an excuse. I know that life is not always fair—that it's hard to get ahead—but your obligation is to work hard, respect the law, be disciplined and strong—and take responsibility for your actions.

A cynic might tear the text into a dozen clichés. Still, the impact on the children—coming from the first of their own to make it, perhaps, to City Hall—may be far greater than we dare predict. Who could be so cynical as to dismiss the possibility that the memory of that moment—the bracing words, the calming voice—may reverberate over time and, 50 years hence, bring tears to a generation of African-American grandparents, just as the memory of La Guardia's far less polished instrument resounds and tugs at the heart even now? •

"A new landmark

in the study of homelessness and extreme poverty in the United States. [Rossi's] careful empirical research, skillful data analysis, and thoughtful policy recommendations will make this highly readable and interesting book a standard reference for those concerned about the problem of severe economic deprivation in our affluent society."
– **William Julius Wilson,** author of *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*

PETER H. ROSSI

DOWN AND OUT IN AMERICA

THE ORIGINS OF HOMELESSNESS

How many homeless are there? What factors forced them on to the streets? Peter Rossi presents the most accurate and comprehensive picture of homelessness in America today. He offers a powerful explanation of its causes, pinpointing dramatic changes in the average age and income, and in the gender and race of the homeless population. His study records that millions more are on the brink of homelessness, and he proposes bold policy solutions to this growing crisis. $15.95

The University of Chicago Press

At bookstores, or call 1-800-621-2736
In Illinois: 312-568-1550

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rescuing Eugene O'Neill from the library.

The Showman Cometh

BY DAVID VAN LEER

The centenary of Eugene O'Neill's birth last fall was celebrated with all the ceremony due an acknowledged master. The Library of America issued the first complete edition of the extant plays. In addition to familiar works, the collection included more than a dozen youthful efforts, three previously unpublished, to give a much fuller sense of O'Neill's artistic development. The university presses followed suit. Yale published a collection of letters, a volume of unfamiliar plays, prose, and poetry, and an analysis of early stagings of O'Neill. Oxford issued a scholarly edition of the posthumous *More Stately Mansions* and a revised printing of the best critical overview of O'Neill's achievement. The two finest biographies of O'Neill were also reissued. Reviewers were appropriately grateful to both scholars and playwright.

Few people thought, however, to perform the plays. In New York, in some sense still the theater capital of the United States, Joseph Papp alternated between experimental contemporary drama and his ongoing "American" cycle of Shakespeare. The Circle in the Square took the centenary as the occasion for a festival of Tennessee Williams. Lincoln Center honored the 50th anniversary of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. Even Colleen Dewhurst, Jason Robards, and José Quintero, who are together responsible for the most compelling O'Neill productions of the past 30 years, were able only to come up with revivals of the familiar *Ah, Wilderness!* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*; and their mini-festival failed commercially and closed prematurely. Regional theater was no more successful. The major companies in Chicago and Washington politely averted their gaze. And when San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre revived *Marco Millions*, O'Neill's satire of Marco Polo and commercialism, it was attacked not merely for its inadequate production but also for its foolish choice.

DAVID VAN LEER, who teaches at the University of California, Davis, is at work on a book about modern culture called *The Queening of America*.

Nobody denies that O'Neill is our greatest playwright, but nobody much likes him. Nor can critics alone rekindle interest. More than most playwrights, O'Neill depends on strong performances by powerful actors and imaginative directors to make his characters live. Unlike more "literary" dramatists—Wilder, Williams, Arthur Miller—

Eugene O'Neill: Complete Plays
edited by Travis Bogard
(Library of America, 3 vols., 3,203 pp., $100 for set, $35 each)

Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill
edited by Travis Bogard and Jackson R. Bryer
(Yale University Press, 800 pp., $35)

The Unknown O'Neill: Unpublished or Unfamiliar Writings of Eugene O'Neill
edited with commentaries by Travis Bogard
(Yale University Press, 444 pp., $40)

More Stately Mansions: The Unexpurgated Edition
edited by Martha Bower
(Oxford University Press, 328 pp., $24.95)

Staging O'Neill: The Experimental Years, 1920-1934
by Ronald H. Wainscott
(Yale University Press, 384 pp., $40)

Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill
by Travis Bogard
(Oxford University Press, 512 pp., $12.95 paper)

O'Neill
by Arthur and Barbara Gelb
(Peter Smith, 990 pp., $21.50)

O'Neill: Son and Playwright
by Louis Sheaffer
(Paragon House, 543 pp., $16.95 paper)

O'Neill does not hold up in print. On the page his themes seem repetitive, his politics naive, his ear tin. And though the complete edition is the academic announcement of O'Neill's importance, it is the theatrical kiss of death. Safely bound in three volumes that few individuals can afford, his plays take their place on the shelf next to the histories of Hen-

The Yale Review

For more than seventy-five years, *The Yale Review* has been publishing the best in poetry, fiction, reviews, and essays of general intellectual interest.

Issue 78:2 offers a special centennial salute to T. S. Eliot. Contributors include:

William Arrowsmith
Cleanth Brooks
Amy Clampitt
Denis Donoghue
Christine Froula
Anthony Hecht
Frank Kermode
A. Walton Litz
Lucy McDiarmid
James Merrill
Lawrence S. Rainey
Gjertrud Schnackenberg
Richard Wilbur
Patricia C. Willis

_____ Please send me Issue 78:2 of *The Yale Review* (T. S. Eliot issue) for $8.00 (includes postage and handling).

_____ Please enter my one-year (four issues) subscription to *The Yale Review*, beginning with Issue 78:2 (T. S. Eliot issue), for $16.00 (individual rate; institutions, please send $25.00).

Please enclose check, or charge to
_____ MasterCard _____ VISA

Account # _____

Expiration date _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

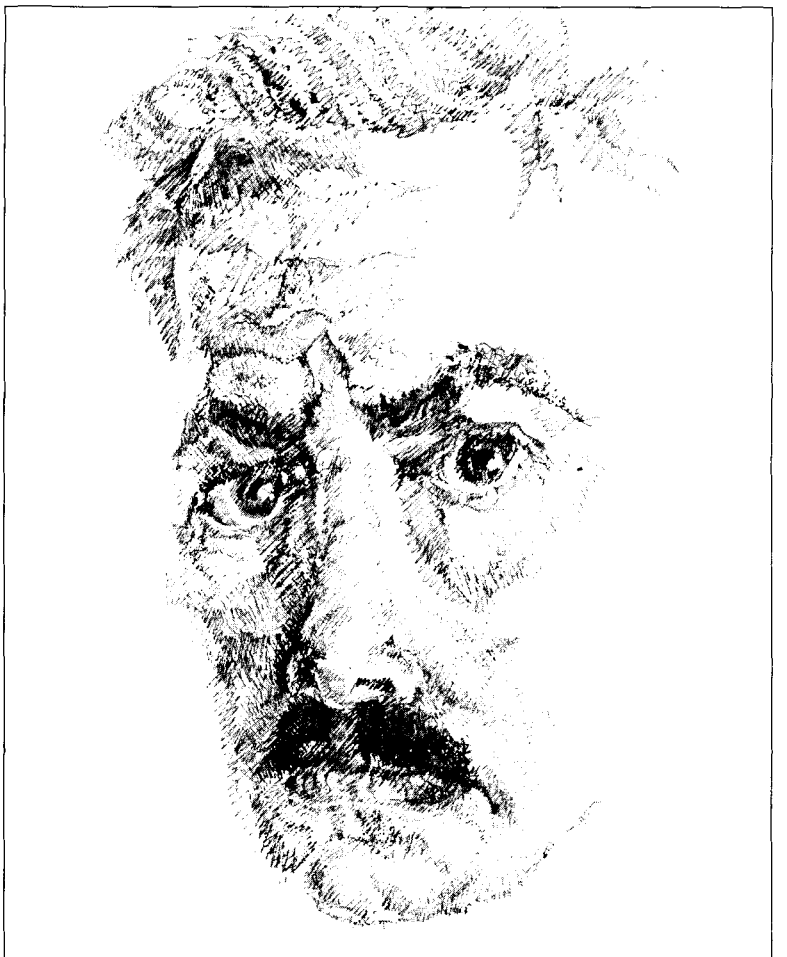
State _____ Zip _____

The Yale Review/Yale University Press
Dept. 3721, 92A Yale Station
New Haven, CT 06520

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ry Adams and Francis Parkman. They become texts we might study in the classroom, but never applaud in theater.

It is not clear why performers and audiences have lost interest in plays that earned their author commercial success, four Pulitzers, and the only Nobel Prize awarded an American playwright. Part of the problem is a vague sense that O'Neill is just too dreary—endless evenings of people whining, often behind masks. Yet O'Neill's work is less ponderous than we remember. By modern standards, the plays are not even all that long. The Quintero revival of *Long Day's Journey* let out only slightly after *Les Mis*, and Jonathan Miller's lickety-split production of a few years back was over before *Cats*. Reading through the 50 plays and more than 500 letters, one is struck less by the gloom and the despair than by the energy and the professionalism. However bleak his themes, O'Neill never lost his excitement at the possibility of moving an audience. He was, after all, the son of James O'Neill, one of the most celebrated matinee idols of his day. In *Long Day's Journey*, O'Neill viewed this heritage negatively: his father's commercial success in the melodramatic *Count of Monte Cristo* prevented him from fulfilling his promise as a Shakespearean actor. But as a playwright O'Neill traded on this practical knowledge inherited from his father, teasing audience expectations as shamelessly as any ham.



EUGENE O'NEILL BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

At the start of his career in the 1910s, he exploited this theatrical knowledge in lurid, manipulative sketches. Under the inspiring but overly technical instruction of George Baker at Harvard, he tempered the melodrama without deviating significantly from the accepted Broadway taste for plot and piety. His bohemian years in Greenwich Village with George Cram Cook, Susan Glaspell, John Reed, and the other Provincetown Players allowed him to experiment with forms of storytelling not then possible on Broadway. The major productions of this period, especially the cycle of plays involving the crew of the *S.S. Glencairn*, are less eventful and more lyrical than was customary in American theater of the teens.

Yet O'Neill in the Village still had his eye on commercial theater uptown. *Beyond the Horizon*, his first success (and Pulitzer Prize), was performed on Broadway without Provincetown actors. So was *Anna Christie*, his most popular early play (and second Pulitzer), which "daringly" introduces a prostitute in its first act only to marry her off happily in the fourth. The more "experimental" Provincetown plays are in many aspects equally traditional. Though bohemian in form, they too are morally conventional, even optimistic.

O'Neill did not become truly innovative until he abandoned the lively amateurism of the Players for the greater resources of the Greenwich Village Theatre and finally of Broadway's Theatre Guild. With the Players he began to experiment with set design in the relatively short *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape*, and moved beyond his early lyric realism into expressionism. These plays distort reality through heavily symbolic language and exaggerated scenic effects borrowed from German cinema.

As O'Neill's needs (and fame) grew, so did his dramatic distortions, ending in the famously "oversize" works of the late 1920s. These middle-period monsters display the idiosyncrasies for which O'Neill is most often parodied: the extreme length, the use of masks, choruses, and interior monologue, the sexual obsessiveness distilled from Freud, the proletarian bluntness borrowed from Marx. Some, like *The Great God Brown*, *Strange Interlude*, and *Mourning Becomes Electra*, parlayed these crudities into commercial success. Others pushed Broadway actors and audiences beyond their limits, in notoriously grandiose failures such as *Marco Millions*, *Dynamo*, and the elephantine biblical pageant *Lazarus Laughed*.

The plays of O'Neill's final period are more realistic, introspective, and ultimately autobiographical. During the 1930s and 1940s O'Neill retired from the public eye to wrestle with a cycle of 11 plays treating American history in terms of the fortunes of a single family over three centuries. Only one play of this cycle, *A Touch of the Poet*, was actually completed, with another, *More Stately Mansions*, left in draft. While tinkering with the cycle, O'Neill also returned to his own family's history of alcoholism, drug abuse, and tuberculosis, explored obliquely in his earliest sketches. Of these more personal works, the early comedy *Ah, Wilderness!* received a successful production in 1933. But for the rest, only *The Iceman Cometh*, a barroom drama based loosely on characters O'Neill had known on the waterfront in 1911 and 1912, made it to Broadway during his lifetime.

Today interest in O'Neill focuses almost exclusively on these late autobiographical plays. According to the received wisdom, O'Neill spent his career coming to terms with his family, and in *Long Day's Journey*, his masterpiece, he successfully laid those ghosts to rest. Yet these plays did not begin to become appreciated until three years after his death, in the celebrated Robards-Quintero revival of *Iceman* in 1956. The success of this revival in turn convinced O'Neill's third wife, Carlotta, to release *Long Day's Journey*, a 1940 account of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The George Washington University
WASHINGTON DC

Endowed Professorships

The George Washington University is currently recruiting for 10 distinguished scholars for appointment to endowed professorships. Applicants should contact the person designated in the description of the position of interest.

LYLE T. ALVERSON PROFESSOR OF LAW
FREDA ALVERSON PROFESSOR OF LAW

These are *two* of four endowed professorships in the National Law Center recently made available by a generous testamentary gift. The holders of these chairs shall be individuals who are outstanding teachers and scholars in the law. They will have made important contributions to the development and understanding of legal principles in the area or areas of their expertise. They will be expected to research, write and publish articles and books that will have a major impact on the way in which courts, legislatures and lawyers look at the operations of the law. They will have opportunities to interact with faculty and students from other disciplines in the University.

Applications and nominations should be addressed to the Office of the Dean, National Law Center, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

ELMER L. KAYSER
PROFESSOR OF LEGAL HISTORY

The person chosen for this new professorship will hold faculty membership in both the Department of History and the National Law Center. He/she must have a willingness to offer courses of interest both to undergraduates in arts and sciences and to law students. Applicants should have a distinguished record of scholarly accomplishments in legal history. Period of specialization within field is open. Graduate training in history required. Ph.D./J.D highly desired. Appointment to be effective at the opening of the 1990-91 academic year.

Applications and nominations, including a *vita* and three references, will be accepted until January 1, 1990. They should be sent to Prof. Edward Berkowitz, Dept. of History, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

OLIVER T. CARR, JR.,
PROFESSOR OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A new professorship intended to take a leading role in M.B.A. field concentration in urban planning and real estate development. Applicants should have extensive knowledge and/or experience in real estate finance and urban development, a record of significant scholarly accomplishments and teaching excellence, a willingness to become involved in private and public sector programs, and a Ph.D., D.B.A., J.D., or other earned doctorate in an appropriate field.

Applications and nominations, including a *vita* and the names of three references, will be accepted until January 1, 1990. They should be addressed to the O.T. Carr, Jr., Professorship Search Committee, School of Government and Business Administration, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

L. STANLEY CRANE
PROFESSOR OF ENGINEERING

This newly endowed professorship in the School of Engineering and Applied Science is expected to be filled in the 1990-91 academic year. The appointment will be coordinated with programmatic developments for a new campus that the University is opening in Northern Virginia in 1991. In the initial phase, academic programs on that campus will be focused primarily on graduate education and research.

Inquiries should be addressed to the Office of the Dean, School of Engineering and Applied Science, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTANCY

A new professorship to be filled by the opening of the 1990-91 academic year. Applicants should have a demonstrated record of scholarly accomplishments in the field of accounting, a desire to teach both undergraduate and graduate students, a willingness to become actively involved in the business community through educational programs and/or research, and must have a Ph.D. or D.B.A. in accounting.

Applications and nominations, including a *vita* and the names of three references, will be accepted until January 1, 1990. They should be addressed to the Benjamin Franklin Professorship Search Committee, School of Government and Business Administration, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

EDWARD F. HOWREY
PROFESSOR OF TRIAL ADVOCACY

This endowed professorship is designed to strengthen the trial skills of students at the National Law Center. The person appointed will have exhibited outstanding trial skills plus the capacity to transfer such skills to others. He/she will be expected to organize and oversee a program that will accommodate all students who wish to participate and will have the ability to find those attorneys in the community with educational and trial skills to provide the support necessary to accomplish this goal. He/she also will be expected to analyze and conduct research into the trial process, resulting in publications that not only enhance the ability of individuals to operate within the existing trial system but that show how the current system can be altered and improved.

Applications and nominations should be addressed to the Office of the Dean, National Law Center, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

E.R. BAKER
PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

This professorship is used for the visiting appointment of a diplomat, distinguished senior public servant or policy-oriented scholar during one semester each academic year. Persons appointed are expected to teach one seminar. Candidates are now being sought for the 1990-91 academic year.

Inquiries should be addressed to the Office of the Dean, Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

CHAUNCY M. DE PEW
PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

This professorship will be filled in 1990-91 as part of a slate of new appointments in communication. Communication studies at the University embrace journalism, radio and television, film studies, speech, and political communication.

For further details contact the Office of the Dean, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

1990-91 CONGRESSIONAL PROFESSOR

This unique professorship is supported by an endowment derived from the sale of city lots granted to the University by an Act of Congress in 1832. Appointments may be made for one semester or for the full academic year. Candidates may be drawn either from public life or from academia. The important criterion is a strong link to the federal city and to civic affairs by virtue of distinguished public service and/or scholarship. Persons chosen are given visiting appointments in the appropriate faculty and are expected to offer courses of both specialized and broad interest.

Inquiries should be addressed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

The University, founded in 1821, is located in the nation's capital, four blocks from the White House. It serves more than 18,000 students at both the undergraduate and graduate level with an exceptional array of programs and services and professional schools in medicine, law, international affairs, business, education, arts and sciences and engineering and applied science.

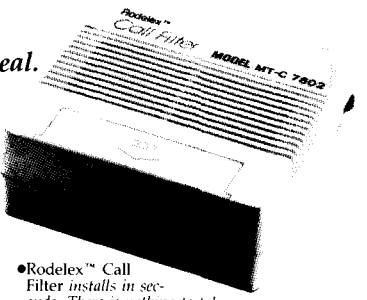
EOE/AAE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Assure privacy and screen out unwanted calls, with . . .

Rodelex™ Call Filter only $69.95*

But read this ad for an even better deal.



We've all experienced it at one time or another: The phone rings, but instead of somebody you'd like to hear from, it's a heavy breather, a telephone solicitor or another unwelcome intruder. Or it may be simply the time of day (or night) that you don't want to be disturbed by a phone call—except from those really close and important to you. You can accomplish just that with the *Rodelex™ Call Filter*. Plug this clever unit into your phone line and enter your own 3-digit code (which you can change any time). Only those who know the code and dial it after your number can get through to you when the *Call Filter* is in the "on" position. You are simply not "at home" to anybody else who might call.

•Rodelex™ Call Filter *installs in seconds. There is nothing to take apart, nothing to put together. When the* Call Filter *is "on", only those knowing the 3-digit code can get through to you. Turn the* Call Filter *"off", and you are "at home" to everybody. You can always call out, of course, regardless of whether the* Call Filter *is "off" or "on".*

We are the exclusive importers of *Rodelex™* electronic devices in the United States and can bring you this clever and useful telephone implement for just $69.95. But we have an even better deal: ***Buy two for $139.90 and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Assure your privacy and your peace of mind and screen out unwanted calls. Get your *Rodelex™ Call Filter* today!

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
TOLL FREE (800) 621-1203
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Please give order **Code #4235A100** for *Rodelex™ Call Filter*. If you prefer, mail check or card authorization and expiration. We need daytime phone for all orders and issuing bank for charge orders. UPS/insurance: $4.95 for one *Rodelex™ Call Filter* and $6.95 for three. Add sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30 day return and one year warranty.

For quantity orders (100+), call Ernest Gerard, our Wholesale/Premium Manager at (415) 543-6570 or write him at the address below.

since 1967
haverhills®
131 Townsend Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

FREE! AMERICA'S MOST WANTED GARDEN CATALOGUE.

200 pages in full color! Over 800 varieties of flowers, 400 different vegetables. Many bred by Burpee, especially for the home gardener. Including many new and exclusive introductions—the brilliant Salvia, Red Hot Sally...Americana Petunias, extra free-blooming...Dazzler Impatiens, so effective in the shade. Pumpkin Prizewinner, the biggest ever! Plus fruit trees...shrubs...garden accessories. All backed by Burpee's famous money-back guarantee. Return coupon NOW for gardening's most wanted catalogue.

Return this Coupon for FREE BURPEE 1990 GARDEN CATALOGUE!

BURPEE
For the Great American Garden.

W. Atlee Burpee & Co.
020990 Burpee Building, Warminster, PA 18974

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

O'Neill family in 1912 that O'Neill himself had asked not be published until 25 years after his death. The triumph of this second Robards-Quintero production later in 1956 led to the premieres or revivals of all the late works—*A Moon for the Misbegotten*, semi-sequel to *Journey*, in 1957; *A Touch of the Poet* in 1958; the one-act *Hughie* in 1964; and *More Stately Mansions* in 1967.

It would be foolish to deny the power of these late works, or to regret their role in the O'Neill revival of the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, it is hard to look forward to new productions of them. It is even harder to accept that *Long Day's Journey* represents the full range of O'Neill's theatrical achievement. *Journey* is, after all, an odd play—both in itself and as an epitome of a diverse career. Written for four main characters on a single day in a single room, it lacks the scenic opulence of most O'Neill. As a piece of stagecraft, it makes use of none of the experimental techniques he championed.

Nor is its theme characteristic. *The Iceman Cometh*, O'Neill's other late triumph, attacks clear-sightedness as a form of nihilism, a suffocating denial of the illusions necessary to sustain life. In *Journey*, however, clear-sighted nihilism seems to win. Tearing away the mask of familial civility, the proto-playwright confronts his father's miserliness, his mother's drug addiction, his brother's alcoholism, and his own TB to find his family transfigured through their suffering. Technically this account of spiritual reconciliation seems too cozy, the kind of realistic family drama O'Neill could not take seriously when he first tried it in *Ah, Wilderness!* And as an American tragedy *Journey* sounds less like his earlier, incest-ridden *Desire Under the Elms* or *Mourning Becomes Electra* than like Arthur Miller's mystifications of the ordinary, or even like Neil Simon's reminiscences about coming of age in Brighton Beach.

Although written 15 years earlier, *Long Day's Journey* is of a piece with the 1950s mentality that first staged it and declared it masterful. Politically committed to individual initiative, the period embraced a progressive optimism that saw each man the master of his own fate. Truth was universal, unaffected by differences of race, class, gender, or sexual preference. Freud was tamed, until psychology became not the study of dark libidinal urges but the therapeutic elimination of personal idiosyncrasies.

Performance was internalized, too, as grandiloquence gave way to the sublimated intensity of Method acting. And, enraptured with paradox and prose style, the "New" critics at Yale declared

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lyric poetry, not epic or drama, the most exalted form of literature. In such an intellectual environment, it is not surprising that autobiographical confession might appear superior to psycho-social satire—that an unproduced play obeying the Aristotelian unities of time and place (and buried in the Yale library stacks) might seem more truthful than baggy Broadway hits. Nor is it surprising that a free thinker notorious for his sympathetic treatment of adultery, incest, and various forms of intrafamilial murder should be rewarded for preaching in his autumnal years the inevitability of the nuclear family.

The values of the 1950s increasingly have come to seem repressive. In such a revisionist climate, it may be time to set aside *Journey* and reconsider the crude extravaganzas for which O'Neill won his reputation as the premiere American playwright. These middle-period plays are not profound; the clever undergraduate gets the point after a few pages. They are scarcely even readable, with their excessive scenic details and the character's interminable (and ungrammatical) asides. Yet psychological subtlety and lyrical prose are not the sole tools of the dramatist. Nor are story, characterization, and poetry the only sources of theatrical power. Pinter's laconic dialogue is as meaningless on the page as O'Neill's verbosity; and one "gets" *Godot* after about ten lines. Like Pinter and Beckett, O'Neill's effectiveness rests less with plot, dialogue, or characters than with his carefully orchestrated accumulation of emotion. Unlike their minimalist accounts, his plays depend on melodramatic overstatement and virtuoso acting (even hamming) in the old style.

Take, for example, the "woman play" *Strange Interlude* of 1927, O'Neill's third Pulitzer and his greatest commercial success. A critical triumph and a best seller in book form, the work is perhaps now best remembered as a part Vera Charles does not get in *Auntie Mame*. Nina Leeds, eternal whore-mother, spends a quarter century seeking to recapture the passion of an adolescent love through inadequate surrogates—her insane husband, her passive lover, her bastard son—only to end "beyond desire" in the arms of a gay friend. With its nine long acts, lurid plot twists, and endless psychological asides, the work can seem like a sophomoric misreading of Strindberg and Freud. As the recent revival with Glenda Jackson demonstrated, it is hard for an audience not to laugh at such inarticulate outbursts as gay Charlie's on his ambivalence toward women:

> (*in a strange agony*) [Nina's] hard! . . like a whore! . . . tearing your heart with dirty finger nails! . . my Nina! . . cruel bitch! . . . some day I won't bear it! . . . I'll scream out the truth about every woman! . . . no kinder at heart than dollar tarts! . . (*then in a passion of remorse*) Forgive me, Mother! . . . I didn't mean all! . . .

It is easy to make fun of such lines. It is harder to say exactly what is wrong with them. They are neither brilliant prose nor subtle psychology, but they effectively portray a possible state of mind. Why do modern audiences feel superior when characters speak openly of their sexual uncertainties? Because people no longer mask their emotions, no longer pretend to adore the parents and lovers they actually despise? Or because we are embarrassed by the unadulterated display of raw emotion? Because melodramatic obviousness holds no truth for us? Or because a generation of actors trained to shrink emotions for a camera can no longer project them from a stage?

Hothouse overripeness may be, like Shakespeare's rhyming teenagers or Porter's soft-shoe thugs, merely one of the conventions we must accept as part of the fun of O'Neill's theatrical world. Nor is clumsy intensity necessarily a burden to an actor. Edward Petherbridge's performance as Charlie was one of the dramatic triumphs of the Jackson revival. Dewhurst and Robards regularly discover poetic cadences in the halting monologues. *Interlude* will probably never again be the sexual shocker it once was,

NEW FROM LibertyPress

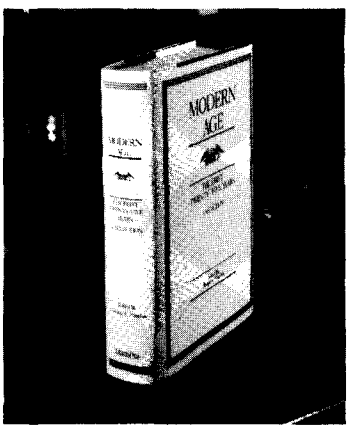
MODERN AGE: THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

A SELECTION

Edited by George A. Panichas

These seventy-eight essays present the richness and diversity of recent conservative scholarship. This indispensable sourcebook tackles the pressing problems in American society and the modern world.

Modern Age was founded in 1957 by Russell Kirk, with Henry Regnery and David S. Collier. Most of the major conservative thinkers and themes of the last three decades are represented in nine sections, including the "Roots of American Order"; "Law, Legislation and Liberty"; and "Not for Marx."



894 + xx pages. Foreword, editor's note.
Hardcover $33.00 **0-86597-061-0**
Paperback $11.00 **0-86597-062-9**

Prepayment is required on all orders not for resale. We pay book rate postage on prepaid orders. Please allow approximately 4 weeks for delivery. *All* orders from outside the United States *must* be prepaid *in U.S. dollars*. To order, or for a copy of our catalogue, write:

LibertyPress/LibertyClassics
7440 N. Shadeland Avenue, Dept. Y 107
Indianapolis, IN 46250

Please send me: *Modern Age: The First Twenty-Five Years*

☐ Enclosed is my check or money order made payable to Liberty Fund, Inc.

☐ Please send me a copy of your latest catalogue.

Quantity Ordered		Price	Amount
	Hardcover	$33.00	
	Paperback	11.00	
		Subtotal	
	Indiana residents add 5% sales tax		
		TOTAL	

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Mail to: Liberty Fund, Inc.
7440 N. Shadeland Avenue
Dept. Y 107
Indianapolis, IN 46250

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but there is no reason why it should not still make for powerfully operatic theater: if not Wagnerian world-drama, then at least the thinking person's *Phantom*.

Eugene O'Neill may be as much the victim of a single theatrical triumph as was his father. *Long Day's Journey into Night* is a brilliant play, just as James O'Neill's Monte Cristo was probably a brilliant performance. Yet the restricted style of that masterpiece has convinced audiences that O'Neill's more characteristic flamboyance is primitive and uninteresting, a youthful indiscretion. The opposite is nearer the truth. Tightly structured and elegantly written, *Journey* suited the tastes of the 1950s that idolized it.

Our post-1960s, postmodern preference for stylistic excess may be more in tune with the monumentality of the earlier works. Matthew Broderick's monologues to the camera in the teen hit *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* demonstrate that O'Neill's techniques are not outmoded, that clever direction can reinvent the dramatic aside for a hip audience. Perhaps other elements in O'Neill might be similarly revived. Glenda Jackson is probably too cerebral and carefully schooled to be fully successful as the promiscuous Nina, but more hyperbolic performers might be able to bring it off. Any number of performance artists could portray the quick-change neuroses of O'Neill's characters. In *Strange Interlude* Bette Midler's extravagance would at least find a richer outlet than in *Stella Dallas*. Peter Sellar's skill at symbolic spectacle might enliven the pageantry of O'Neill's biblical *Lazarus Laughed* or his Oriental *Marco Millions* as fully as it did that of his father's Napoleonic *Monte Cristo*. And those audiences wearied by the non-verbal hypersubtlety of the neo-Method actors might welcome the clarity of an interior monologue, or even an old-fashioned mask.

Rethinking might even retrieve *Long Day's Journey* from the classroom solemnity that has blighted its most recent revivals. In this age of political engagement on and off the stage, O'Neill's tortured quartet can seem like merely pampered suburbanites. Edmund, the earnest would-be poet at the moral center of the play, has become smug as a character and deadly as a role. Every young actor knows that drunken, profligate Jamie is the career-making part. And even mother Mary seems too genteel in her drugged soliloquies, neither terrifying tragedy like Lady Macbeth nor scenery-chewing fun like Agnes of God. With *Journey*, as with all O'Neill, modern audiences are not rejecting the play, only the false piety that enshrined it as a classic.

When separated from an outmoded 1950s sense of decorum, *Journey* shows itself, for all its elegance and its balance, as one more piece of flamboyant showmanship. Like all O'Neill characters, the Tyrones are troupers, reveling in the joy of self-dramatization. All assume roles: Edmund's lyricism and Mary's vulnerability are as fake as the more obvious hypocrisies of Tyrone and Jamie. The tragedy of *Journey* lies, moreover, not in its ruthless honesty, but in its recognition that people cannot be honest, can never drop all their masks. Academicians have in their readings obscured the messiness of a play whose only flaw is its emotional tidiness.

A truly contemporary production of *Journey* would cut through the sanctimoniousness and put back the theatricality. We may not be ready for an unironic *Interlude*, but we can hope for a skeptical *Journey*; if we cannot yet accept the truth beneath the hollowness, we can at least explore the hollowness beneath the truth. After 30 years of admiration, we have grown weary of the Tyrones' tragic self-pity. But we can still recapture their comic self-contempt, and rescue for postmodern audiences at least one of O'Neill's theater pieces from the shelf of literary respectability where they languish.

Blood, Sweat, and Vulgarity

BY SAMUEL HYNES

Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War by Paul Fussell

(Oxford University Press, 330 pp., $19.95)

The Second World War has never acquired an honorific title. It hasn't been called The Second Great War, or The Even Greater War, or The War to End Anything. It goes on being simply The Second World War. The naïveté that could associate the violent deaths of millions of human beings with greatness died on the western front in the First War, and men went to the second unencumbered by the big abstractions. Eisenhower might call his invasion of Europe a Crusade if he wanted to, but nobody listened. It was just a job that had to be done.

Nearly half a century after the end of hostilities, the Second World War has not generated a myth as moving or as literary as the first one did. Nobody has said that "The Poetry is in the Pity," nobody has written an *All Quiet* or a *Journey's End*. There is no dramatic shape to the second war's story, no peripeteia, no conversion from innocence to bitter wisdom, no irony, no outrage. In their place is the sustained conviction that great moral issues were at stake, and the awareness of the scale of the thing, that it was fought mightily over vast spaces. It isn't really much of a *story*, and it's not surprising that there is still no canon of World War II literature.

For most people these two elements, the moral issues and the scale, define the myth of the Second War. This seems to be the case whether one fought in the war or not. John Updike, for example, who was a child when the war ended, wrote this version of the myth last summer:

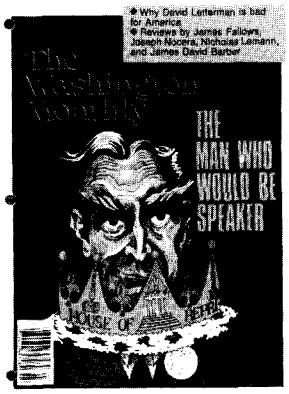
> This war, at least for Europeans and North Americans, has become the century's central myth, a vast imaging of a primal time when good and evil contended for the planet, a tale of Troy whose angles are infinite and whose central figures never fail to amaze us with their size, their theatricality, their sweep.

This is a romanticized and aestheticized version of the war, putting it into literary and theatrical terms in a way that obscures the war's real issues; but it seems to be the way many people imagine it. And the drama was there, all right: there were heroes and villains. And what is more important, they never changed; at the end of it all, the armies went home (at least *our* armies did) still certain that the same goods were good, the same evils evil.

It is against this reading of the war, at once reductively moral and theatrical, that Paul Fussell directs the argument of *Wartime*. His concern is not with narrative history—there are no battle pieces here and no analyses of strategy, and virtually no chronology; he is out not to tell the story, but to dismantle the myth. "For the past 50 years," he writes in his pref-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WE KNEW WRIGHT FROM THE START


Why David Letterman is bad for America
Reviews by James Fallows, Joseph Nocera, Nicholas Lemann, and James David Barber
THE MAN WHO WOULD BE SPEAKER

Three years before the downfall of House Speaker Jim Wright, *The Washington Monthly* warned its readers: "If Tip O'Neill seems like the sort of guy who would write out a taxpayer endorsed check to everyone who tried to sell him swampland in Florida, Jim Wright seems more like the guy selling the land."

And that's not the first time we anticipated the news that would later make headlines . . .

➥ In a story we ran six years *before* the Challenger disaster, we warned that the space shuttle was unsafe, saying, "Here's the plan. Suppose one of the solid-fueled boosters fails. The plan is, you die."

➥ Seven months *before* the stock market crash in 1987, we warned that the programmed trading and low-margin stock options could turn a bad day into Black Monday.

➥ Months *before* the Iran-Contra scandal broke in newspapers, we warned readers, "This National Security Council staff is the worst in history."

➥ While the national media kept silent about the disgraceful performance of Washington, D.C. mayor Marion Barry—and while *The Washington Post* was still endorsing Barry for re-election—we were uncovering the incompetence and the corruption of his administration.

The Washington Monthly is "often ahead of the curve."
Mary McGrory, *The Washington Post*

Edited by **Charles Peters,** author of *Tilting at Windmills.*

Where such writers as **James Fallows, Nicholas Lemann, Taylor Branch,** and **Michael Kinsley** got their start.

The Washington Monthly

SPECIAL OFFER—$13 OFF (For new subscribers only)

❑ YES! Enter my subscription for a full year (11 issues) for only $20.00.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

❑ Payment enclosed ❑ Bill me later

❑ Charge my: ❑ Visa ❑ Mastercard

Credit card # _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____

For Canadian subscriptions add $3 postage; all other foreign add $5. 79N502

Send to: *The Washington Monthly* 1611 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ace, "the Allied war has been sanitized and romanticized almost beyond recognition by the sentimental, the loony patriotic, the ignorant, and the bloodthirsty. I have tried to balance the scales." Fussell intends to disperse altogether the notion that the Second World War was a "Good War," and to put in its place an anti-myth—one that will be *un*-sentimental, *un*patriotic, informed, and —what's the opposite of bloodthirsty?— pacific. He aims to persuade his readers to alter their understandings, and to accept his view that the war they think of as justified and necessary was in fact as stupid and as meaningless as, in *its* myth, the First War is seen to be.

I can't think of anyone better equipped for this problematic task than Fussell is. He is the author of a justly admired study of the First World War, *The Great War and Modern Memory;* he is a fastidious scholar (take a careful look at the notes to *Wartime*); and he is an elegant writer, one of the few contemporary critics whose prose actually gives pleasure. And he has another qualification that is at least as important: he has been a soldier. He served as an infantry platoon leader in France, and was wounded in action. It is a demonstrable fact that the best books about war have been written by men who fought, and that the best view of battle is from ground level in the middle of it: you might call this the Willie-and-Joe Principle. Of course there have been exceptions—there was Homer, there was Stephen Crane—but not many. War, one must conclude, is very nearly unimaginable; most men must live it before they can begin to understand it.

One other fact about Fussell is crucial to this book (and for that matter to all his books): he is an ironist by nature and by training. He began his writing career as an 18th-century scholar, with books like *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism*, and you can see in his later, non-academic books—*Abroad, The Boy Scout Handbook and Other Observations, Class*, and *Thank God for the Atom Bomb*—that his choice of a field was an inevitable one. For Fussell shares with the great Augustans their rational and superior posture toward humanity, their disdain for whatever is popular and common, and their distrust for mass feelings. These attitudes, in their highest expressions, have produced the greatest satirists in our language; at their lowest they produce condescension, snobbery, and curmudgeonly huffing. Fussell has come near to both ends of that continuum in his time, and there is something of both in *Wartime*.

It was the ironist in Fussell, addressing the great ironic episode of modern history, that made *The Great War and Modern Memory* the fine and moving book that it is. It is essentially a book about rhetoric—the rhetoric of the First World War—and how it was altered and made ironic by events. Because the story of that war has an ironic twist to it, Fussell was at home in it, and could write a book about it that is very personal, not so much criticism as a kind of displaced war memoir—as though instead of writing about his own experiences in his own war he had chosen to write about the previous war, but in a strongly emotional way. You see that personal involvement at once, in the book's dedication:

> To the Memory of
> Technical Sergeant Edward Keith Hudson
> ASN 36548772
> Co. F, 410th Infantry
> Killed beside me in France
> March 15, 1945.

Consider all that is implied in these lines: male comradeship in arms, shared combat in a foreign land, the violent death of a friend in battle. There is a whole idea of war here—and a rather romantic one, I'd say. It's interesting that Fussell could attach those feelings to the Great War, and not to his own war; there is nothing so personal in *Wartime*.

Fussell begins his assault on the Myth of the Good War in *Wartime* with the errors, the misconceptions, and the ghastly blunders of the war. This is shrewd strategy—for what can one say in defense of "precision bombing" or the casualties that our own weapons inflicted on our own troops, or of The Great Dakar Fuck-up? But the heart of his case lies not in the misuses of men, but in the misuses of language; *Wartime* is another book about rhetoric. Its thesis is that during the Second World War thought, and thought's instrument, language, were degraded and corrupted. "The damage the war visited upon bodies and buildings is obvious," Fussell writes. "Less obvious is the damage it did to intellect, discrimination, honesty, individuality, complexity, ambiguity, and irony, not to mention privacy and wit."

Many of the terms in that last sentence are from the vocabulary of Fussell's Augustans: Swift and Pope would have shared his concern for discrimination, irony, and wit. But they are also a vocabulary of our own century, which together define a particular modern style—the mode of discourse that has descended in English and American culture from imaginative writers like Eliot and Joyce and Woolf, and from critics like Empson and Tate and Blackmur. Modernism, in short: the High Ironic Style of our century. And not only a style, an ideal of civilization and a system of values that went with it—private, cultivated values to support the gifted individual marooned in our unsympathetic, democratic century. One can argue that the Second World War was the end of that high style and that idea of civilization, and that Fussell, writing out of a Modernist sensibility, condemns the war because it made such sensibilities anachronistic.

Certainly Fussell sees the war as the enemy of those values and of that style. War dehumanizes, war subjects thought

The Mummy Viewed

Laid out in delicate repose for visitants
like us, who come dumbly believing we have come
for another of those fifty-cent amusements,
and wish we had not come, had left the children home,

there she is: a girl, ancient, perfectly chaste
though stripped of more than clothes, stripped of all
so that even what survives, formally debased,
has suffered an alien and drastic memorial.

And then the puzzlement: given spirit and flesh,
which element has been surrendered, which displaced?
as crowding we peer from ordinary callousness
into the carved Egyptian jasper of her face—

like staring into any neat and bloodless wound
whereof the pain is disproportionate: a papercut,
those open, emptied hands Christ offered to the room
of Thomases, or this queer human apricot.

Scott Cairns

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to "debilitating simplifications," war is gullible and believing and unironic, war suppresses individual identity, and turns men into regiments. His greatest enemies are the degraders of language, and his best chapters are arraignments of the lies of governments, and of the terrible homogenizing of terms, and therefore of feelings, in wartime. There are original, inventive chapters on how the troops used language: "Chickenshit, An Anatomy," and "Fresh Idiom," which deals with, among other things, the songs of the services, including "The Fucking Great Wheel," which even President Bush is said to have sung in his day.

Fussell's war heroes are not men under arms, but the writers, many of them civilians, who fought back with style and taste against war's decivilizing force. His literary masters have long been Evelyn Waugh and Kingsley Amis, two fierce satirists, both of whom served in the war (without distinction), and who survived to write ironically about it. Both appear in *Wartime*, and are praised for their ironic vision of war's chickenshit. *Brideshead Revisited* in particular is offered as a model of the conflict that Fussell sees in the war, between military crudity and the felicities of elegance and taste.

But the real hero of the book—and a most unlikely one—is Cyril Connolly, minor novelist and reviewer, sybarite and exquisite-manqué, procrastinator, self-absorbed whiner, failed genius. Connolly's career as a whole is a dreary story, but he had one period of high achievement, the war years, during which he founded and edited the literary monthly *Horizon* in London. It was the best high-brow English journal of its time, one of the best of any time. Fussell describes *Horizon* as "one of the most civilized and civilizing of periodicals," and so it was; but what makes Connolly the hero of this book is that he carried on his mission while the V-1s buzzed overhead and the bombs fell on London. He and *Horizon* were a civilizing force, opposing war's brutality in the only way that civilization can, by going on being civilized. And, one might add, Modernist.

The place of Connolly and *Horizon* at the center of *Wartime* brings into focus what Fussell's book is really about: it is a celebration of an idea of civilization, and a denunciation of war, civilization's antithesis and enemy. And because, in Fussell's view, war won, it is also a sort of elegy for lost values—the last civilized Modernist, like H. G. Wells's last Martian, howling alone on Primrose Hill.

In one of Bill Mauldin's great war cartoons, Willie says to Joe: "You'll get over

You deserve to know the facts about. . .

The "West Bank" and Gaza

Should Israel withdraw from the territories?

The "intifada," the uprising of Arab Palestinians in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza has been going on since December of 1987. It has so far caused over 500 deaths. Many believe that the conflict would end if Israel were to withdraw from the territories, cede them to the Palestinian Arabs, and allow them to create a Palestinian state in them.

What are the facts?

■ The suggestion that Israel should give up the territories and that good things would flow from that is based on two assumptions, namely 1) that the demands of the Palestinian Arabs for independence from Israel are the source of the Arab conflict with Israel; and 2) that Israel's withdrawal from the territories and the creation of a Palestinian state in them would satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs, that it would end the hostility of the Arab nations against Israel, and that it would restore peace to the area.

■ Unfortunately, both of these assumptions are not in accord with reality. The desire of the Arab nations to destroy Israel has been unrelenting from the day of the creation of Israel in 1948. It has given rise to five major wars, has caused tens of thousands of casualties, and untold destruction. The PLO, whose covenant—never changed and never amended—unequivocally calls for the destruction of Israel, was founded in 1964, long before Israel's administration in the territories. Thus, the almost single-minded obsession of the Arabs to destroy Israel, and not Israel's refusal to accede to the creation of a Palestinian state, is the cause of the never-ending conflict in the area.

■ It is difficult for the Western mind to understand the depth of passion on the part of the Arabs for the destruction of Israel. Among reasonable people, most conflicts might eventually be amenable to peaceful and rational solution. But in the Arab-Israel conflict, no such solution is in the cards for the foreseeable future. The reason is that 300 million Arabs consider the very existence of Israel an intolerable offense to their sense of history and destiny. It is not Israel's administration of the "West Bank" that is unacceptable to the Arabs; it is the very existence of Israel. There is no reason to believe that Israel's withdrawal and the establishment of a Palestinian state would appease the Arabs and induce them to make peace with Israel.

■ One can speculate as to what would be likely to happen if Israel—inadvisedly or ultimately bowing to pressure—were to yield the "West Bank" to Arab control. The murderous fratricidal passions that have been played out in Lebanon in the last fifteen years would be repeated in even more violent form. It is an improbable expectation that a state dominated by the murderous PLO would be the first Arab state ever to adhere to anything resembling democratic and human rights principles or that it would be a friend of the United States, and not an eager pawn of the Soviet Union.

■ The Lebanon slaughter would be shifted to the new Palestinian state, with Israel being a much readier target of its fury. A Palestinian Arab state on the "West Bank" would cut through Jerusalem, touch on the suburbs of Tel Aviv, and have a long border, nine to fifteen miles from the sea, with Israel's most thickly populated areas. Palestinian militias, armed, not with gasoline bombs and stones, but with helicopters, missiles, artillery and automatic weapons, would have Israeli pedestrians within rifle range, and Zion Square in Jerusalem and Ben Gurion airport within mortar range.

Few responsible elements in Israel's government and society wish to annex Gaza and the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). But also, hardly any responsible elements would consider relinquishing those territories for the creation of a Palestinian state. The Palestinian Arabs enjoy full civil rights and have been offered free elections and full autonomy by Israel, in line with Israel's commitments in the Camp David Accords. Moreover, Israel is ready and has always been ready to discuss the permanent status of the territories with responsible Palestinian representatives three years after the implementation of the autonomy. The situation of Israel and the territories is a bad one—no doubt about it. But the alternative to bad is not necessarily good. In this case, at least at the present time, the alternative would likely be a catastrophe, which, in its consequences, could even put the horrible situation of Lebanon in the shade. Real peace in the area will not come by Israel's yeilding minimum strategic depth to its mortal enemies. It can only come about by the eventual rise of democratic governments in the "front-line" Arab states, governments that would accept Israel's existence and could learn to live in peaceful co-existence with it.

This ad has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East

Gerardo Joffe, President

(fly. Western Regional Director of CAMERA)

P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159

FLAME is a tax-deductible, non-profit educational 501(c)(3) organization. Its purpose is to combat media inaccuracies, through public education and publicity. Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in newspapers and magazines. Our overhead is minimal. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work and for these clarifying messages.

Yes, I want to help in the publication of these ads and in clarifying the situation in the Middle East. I include my tax-deductible contribution in the amount of

$ _____ NR /24

My name is _____

I live at _____

In _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: FLAME, P.O. Box 590359, San Francisco, CA 94159

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it, Joe, I wuz gonna write a book exposin' the army after the war myself." Willie got over it, but Fussell has not, and the persistence of his rage against the war, 50 years after, is perplexing. One possible explanation is that the real object of his wrath is not war itself, but the stupidity of human beings in not seeing it as *he* does—the true satirist's rage against humanity, for being "the sentimental, the loony patriotic, the ignorant, and the bloodthirsty."

Another possible explanation is in a remark of Connolly's that Fussell approvingly quotes. Writing about Henry James, Connolly observed that he was a "symbol of a certain way of life, a way that is threatened not only by the totalitarian enemy but by the philistine friend." Connolly felt that dual threat; and so, I think, does Fussell. But what do those two terms "totalitarian" and "philistine" have to do with one another? Both, one might say, are enemies of civilization. But one is repressive and lethal, the other simply tasteless. One is the political terror of our age, the other merely the price of democracy. You can only merge them if you turn the war into a paradigm case of the modern process of social leveling, and say that the trouble with the Second World War was its vulgarity. And to do that you must deny that the war had any political causes or meanings.

Here we come to the major weakness of *Wartime*: that it expresses no political sense at all. Consider this passage in which Fussell condemns the war:

> It was a savage, insensate affair, barely conceivable to the well-conducted imagination (the main reason there's so little good writing about it) and hardly approachable without some currently unfashionable theory of human mass insanity and inbuilt, inherited corruption.

Is Original Sin really an adequate account of the causes of the Second World War? What about Nazism, Fascism, Stalinism, Japanese militarism? To be what Fussell describes himself as being, "the historian of emotion and attitude," is perhaps not an adequate basis for understanding the war's significance.

"America," Fussell writes, "has not yet understood what the Second World War was like," and his conviction that this is true has been his motive for writing his book. In the middle of my reading of *Wartime* I took time off to go to a reunion of my old Marine Corps squadron. I'm not usually a reunion-going type, but I went this time, and as I looked around at those friends of 45 years ago, I wondered whether they understood their war, and whether they would understand Fussell's version of it. What, I wondered, would they make of a passage like this one:

> It's thus necessary to observe that it was a war and nothing else, and thus stupid and sadistic, a war, as Cyril Connolly said, "of which we are all ashamed . . . a war . . . which lowers the standard of thinking and feeling . . . which is as obsolete as drawing and quartering."

Most of them would not have heard of Cyril Connolly, but whether they had or not, they would not understand why he should have felt ashamed of the war that they had fought. They would say, I thought, that it was sometimes stupid and sometimes not, sometimes sadistic and sometimes simply violent, because war *is* violent. But, they would add, the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, the Germans had conquered France, the crematoriums of the concentration camps were smoking. They would agree among themselves, I thought, that the war had been, if not a "Good War," then a war so obviously necessary that there was nothing to be argued about. And to Connolly's remark about lowering the standard of thinking and feeling they would probably ask what that standard would have been in a Nazi Europe, a Japanese Asia?

Speaking for these old friends, I am obviously speaking for myself. And in so speaking I am taking issue with a writer I admire. But to take issue is to acknowledge the troubling impact of this powerful though to my mind wrong-headed book, and to suggest that it has importance for contemporary readers. For Fussell is surely right in thinking that our war generation and the generations that have followed have taken the Second World War too complacently as a pure moral act against an absolute evil. I think it was Russell Baker who wryly called it "the last nifty war," and most of us must feel something like that bland satisfaction with our nation's last unambiguous victory. Fussell's version of the war doesn't, perhaps, exactly "balance the scales," but it is a useful corrective. Nobody who reads it will come away thinking about the war complacently.

SAMUEL HYNES is the author of *Flights of Passage: Reflections of a World War II Aviator* (Pocket Books).

Endless Love

BY ROBERT M. ADAMS

The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda by Miguel de Cervantes translated from the Spanish by Celia Richmond Weller and Clark A. Colahan

(University of California Press, 401 pp., $35)

Corsicurbo the barbarian is bellowing at the top of his voice down the rocky opening of an underground cavern. He lowers a length of cable, and is able finally to draw up—bound, dirty, and ragged—an extraordinarily handsome young man, who when he shakes his mop of golden curls is revealed to be . . . Who? Our hero Persiles? Not a bit of it. Just wait a while and you'll find out. The four barbarians hustle the young man roughly onto a raft and embark with him for a nearby island. One of them threatens to shoot him with a huge flint-pointed arrow, but changes his mind. I don't know why, he just does.

Meanwhile, between the two islands a squall blows up, the raft breaks apart, all the barbarians are drowned, and the young man drifts on a couple of logs to a tranquil spot in the angry sea, where he is rescued by a friendly vessel, unbound, and given food and drink. That's the end of the first chapter of the first book. There are four books with a total of 79 chapters, so the reader has a lot to look forward to.

Before you go very far, you'll learn that the young man's name is probably not Persiles, though perhaps it may be, and that for the moment he goes by the name of Periandro. The young lady he is trying to rescue—fresh as May, radiant as the sun, the delight and admiration of all who see her—prefers for the time being to be known as his beloved sister Auristela, though some people say she is his beloved Sigismunda. Where are they? Somewhere way up north, Iceland, Greenland, Thule, the Hebrides, like that. What are they doing in those unlikely surroundings? It seems they are on a pilgrimage to Rome, but have already

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

encountered some obstacles, and are obviously due to encounter many more.

One of their big troubles, and one of their major advantages, is that Periandro and Auristela are so smashingly beautiful that they attract fascinated attention and adorers, both humble and predatory, wherever they go. Dukes and princes tumble head over heels in love with Auristela; princesses and ladies of immense fortune try to waylay Periandro. Nobody knows who they really are or where exactly they come from. Their lack of pedigree matters no more than their apparent poverty. Why are they concealing their origins and their relationship? One thing is very clear; they are persons of the utmost courtesy, virtue, and good breeding.

As the book opens, Auristela is being held by the barbarians to fulfill one of their superstitious rites, a preliminary of which will be the ritual murder of Periandro or any other male from the outside world. This necessitates some cross-dressing on Periandro's part, and some diplomatic bargaining. But after a while a bloody struggle breaks out between the barbarian factions, in the course of which Antonio the good barbarian leads the prisoners to relative safety. Both of them then have to get rid of some importunate high-born suitors, but in due course Periandro and Auristela, accumulating fellow travelers and adventurous associates as they go, are almost ready to embark on their pilgrimage.

Before embarking, however, they all have to explain who they are and how they got where they happen to be at the moment. These narratives, though not always either full or truthful, are very circumstantial indeed, and some of the listeners are outspoken on the need for more concision. (Periandro in particular devotes the better part of six chapters to a romantic cock-and-bull story that, apart from striking the listeners as unbelievable, doesn't explain his circumstances in the least.) But they are all ladies and gentlemen, with a few miscellaneous rogues and roguesses mixed in, and they all take particular delight in a well-told story, true or not. In addition, though the sub-narratives do take a lot of time, they very often break off, by way of compensation, in the middle of things, not to resume till after a long interval, if ever.

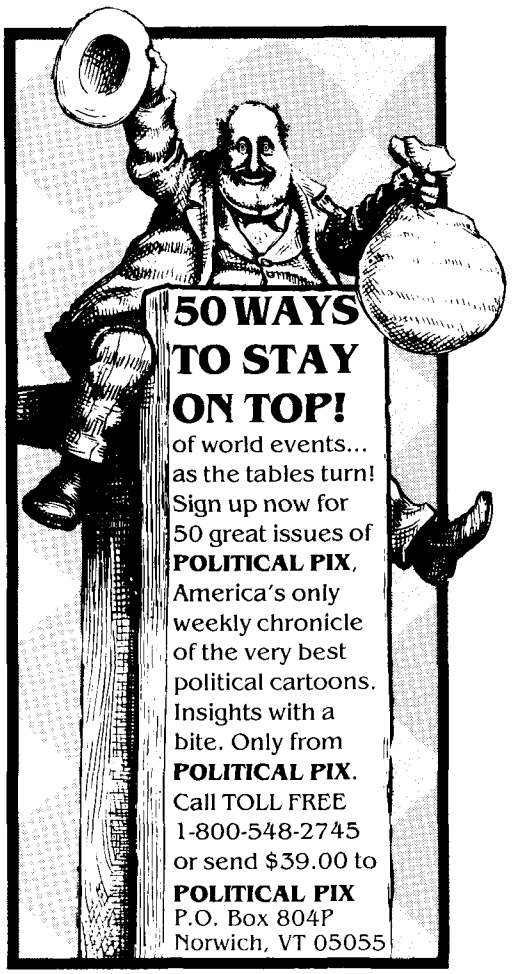
So when these formalities are finished, and various minor personages have settled where they want to go, the remaining pilgrims make their way to an Island of Hermitages near England, where they have some adventures with hermits, and then sail on to Lisbon. Having been received there by the viceroy with all the ceremonies appropriate to their rank, they proceed on foot (avoiding major cities as dangerous distractions) across Spain, France, and northern Italy, down to Rome, where—but anybody who's read the book this far will want to learn for himself what amazing things happened in Rome, and who in fact our principal persons turned out to be—and how—and why.

Needless to say, I've left out of this summary all sorts of peripheral adventures: how Periandro wrestled with a madman atop a tower, what happened to Croriano and Ruperta, the trick marriage of Feliciana and Rosanio, the doings of foolish Bartolomé and the tough little tramp from Talavera, the machinations of sundry wicked witches, and much, much more. It's hard to imagine any reader of literary taste who won't enjoy making the acquaintance of gallant Periandro, his adorable sister Auristela, and their entourage of friends. They're personages of the greatest urbanity and sensitivity.

Auristela in particular has a gift for the sententious Spanish phrase (despite the fact that she's not supposed to know Spanish) that rouses general admiration. She is a sensible, level-headed—but not too level-headed—young woman, and the translators have enriched her flow of adages and sayings with a welcome flavoring of 20th-century colloquialism. The barbarians who accompany them on their travels likewise turn out to be delightful barbarians; they, too, are handsome, intelligent, and honorable. The younger one, Antonio junior, may be a little hasty about shooting people with his bow and arrows, but the ladies explain to him that it's not good form, and he restrains himself.

In two words, it's a crazy, wonderful book. It is rich in episode, crowded with incident, ridiculously improbable, but no more silly than any half-dozen 17th-century operas run through a blender and baked in a very large pie. Here and there one recognizes a flavor of pastoral, a whiff of the picaresque, a smattering of mythology, the whole topped off with a meringue of romance plus adventure. The final book written by Don Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, and published posthumously only in 1617, this is an old man's book, brimming with life and wit, revealing the author's age mostly in leisured moments of warm personal conversation, and perhaps in the special tenderness he betrays for his spirited young ladies and their gallant admirers.

Though popular on publication, the *Persiles* didn't have, for a long time, a very positive press. The Encyclopedia Britan-



Fact Finding Associate Director

Major national non-profit human relations organization seeks Associate Fact Finding Director with strong academic credentials and professional experience to gather information and analyze the activities of extremist and propaganda groups, as well as to conduct detailed briefings and presentations to lay and professional groups. The successful candidate should have a sound knowledge of basic research methods, the ability to write well and investigative experience; legal or journalism background is desirable, but not required. Applicant should be a creative problem solver and have a broad knowledge of public affairs and Jewish community concerns. Please send resume including salary requirements to:

NAS Confidential Reply, NY 1
419 Park Avenue South (7th fl)
New York, New York 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nica (11th edition, *sub* "Cervantes") declared weightily that it was "the most carefully written of his prose works and the least animated or attractive of them." But those uncharitable words were penned by an Englishman and a Victorian who, as a guide to what's lively and alluring, can safely be disregarded. The *Persiles* is not, to be sure, the universal book that the two so-very-different *Don Quixotes* make up. The fantasy of this final book is on a different plane. You might say it is more impudent in its defiance of the probabilities. It could be thought to stand in the same relation to the *Quixote* as *The Winter's Tale* stands to *Measure for Measure*.

The *Persiles* existed in English before this most recent version by Celia Weller and Clark Colahan, but the 1619 translation was made from a French version, the 1741 rendering was a very loose adaptation, and the 1854 reading by Margaret Stanley was riddled with mistakes and omissions. So in effect the present version really offers the *Perisles* for the first time in proper English dress. The translators have delicately balanced the formalities of its chronological age with the friskiness of its spirit; the finished version is just as much fun to read as it obviously was to make.

A book as whirling, as provocatively free in its organization, as this one is likely to attract the attention of more sober and methodical scholars who, by laying emphasis on one or another component, try to make the book as a whole more coherent and comprehensible. The *Persiles* has been described as a baroque novel—which, in the primeval sense of "irregular in form," it certainly is. But the adjective doesn't advance us much beyond what's obvious on the face of things.

Adding that it's a Christian Baroque novel promises to combine the variety of luxuriant episodes with a central theme, the developing Christian faith of Periandro and Auristela. But the luxuriance is more apparent than the central stalk to which it is said to be attached. For Auristela the Christian religion serves frequently not as a guiding light, but as a pretext for putting away unwelcome suitors. Periandro gives even fewer signs of developing devotion, or maturity of mind, or any other of the desired qualities.

The book ends, not with the lovers walking off into the sunset, but with a set of narrative bangs. Auristela declares she is retiring to a nunnery—really and truly this time, not just to dodge matrimony, though that is the effect it will have. Periandro goes off disconsolately, but learns something that brings him running back. They embrace. An obscure villain tries, for reasons of the utmost obscurity, to cut Periandro's throat, and almost succeeds. The villain is captured and hanged expeditiously by the local authorities. A character never previously named in the novel shows up in dying condition, but lasts long enough to give the lucky couple his blessing and all the social status they could want.

It's a fine display of fireworks that leaves the reader as well as the characters in a mood to warble, "Oh, frabjous day! Calloo, callay!" But as the model of a decorous Christian matrimony—well, forget it. So, take the book as a frolic compounded of fun, foolishness, and an old soldier's wise irony. On that basis, you'll gain in delight rather more than you'll lose in sober edification.

ROBERT M. ADAMS is the author of *Shakespeare: The Four Romances* (W. W. Norton).

Class Wars

BY ANNE TYLER

Among Schoolchildren by Tracy Kidder

(Houghton Mifflin, 340 pp., $19.95)

Some time ago, a popular magazine published an article about the routine of a Korean fruitstand owner in Manhattan. Readers observed almost the entire round of his day—the pre-dawn journey to purchase fresh produce, the comings and goings of his customers, the intricate, patched-together work schedules of the relatives assisting him—before the realization finally hit: *This man never, ever goes to bed.* Apart from a couple of hours on the floor behind his shop, he had managed no sleep whatsoever.

What brings the Korean grocer to mind is Tracy Kidder's new book—a non-fiction account of nine months in the life of a fifth-grade teacher in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Chris Zajac, a self-proclaimed "old-lady teacher" (she's all of 34), instructs, cajoles, berates, loves, and bullies some 20 children, most of them from less than ideal home environments. Nearly all of her daylight hours are devoted to her students, as well as a good portion of her night hours. After supper she grades papers, stopping now and then to care for her own two children. When she goes to bed, she often lies awake mulling over various students' problems. Even when she sleeps, she is likely to dream of school.

And her job takes at least as much physical energy as hauling crates of fruit around. Turn to the first page of *Among Schoolchildren*, and the opening paragraph will grab you up by a handful of shirtfront:

> Mrs. Zajac wasn't born yesterday. She knows you didn't do your best work on this paper, Clarence. Don't you remember Mrs. Zajac saying that if you didn't do your best, she'd make you do it over? As for you, Claude, God forbid that you should ever need brain surgery. But Mrs. Zajac hopes that if you do, the doctor won't open up your head and walk off saying he's *almost* done, as you just said when Mrs. Zajac asked you for your penmanship, which, by the way, looks like who did it and ran. Felipe, the reason you have hiccups is, your mouth is always open and the wind rushes in. You're in fifth grade now. So, Felipe, put a lock on it. Zip it up. Then go get a drink of water. Mrs. Zajac means business, Robert. The sooner you realize she never said everybody in the room has to do the work except for *Robert*, the sooner you'll get along with her. And . . . Clarence. Mrs. Zajac knows you didn't try. You just don't hand in junk to Mrs. Zajac. She's been teaching an awful lot of years. She didn't fall off the turnip cart yesterday. She told you she was an old-lady teacher.

What you're hearing there is Mrs. Zajac's "teacher voice"—part of the persona she adopts to keep her charges toeing the mark. In private life anything but forbidding (a glimpse of Mrs. Zajac off duty shows her in shorts, clowning around with her six-year-old), she displays to her pint-sized public a facade so authoritative that almost no one questions it. "The first day it's gotta be grr," she counsels her student teacher, and she advises "a mean horrid voice" and a "teacher finger."

"She knows every trick in the book," one of her pupils whispers, but another confides, "Now I believe for my own self she ain't as mean as they say." And you can tell that way down deep, the others agree. In Mrs. Zajac's animated lectures

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(particularly those dealing with history, which are a treat to watch), in her persistence with the most recalcitrant cases and her fierce refusal to lower her expectations, no matter how limited the student's background, she demonstrates an abiding respect both for learning and for those she's trying to teach, and that fact is not lost even on children.

Tracy Kidder can turn the most unlikely subject into riveting drama (computers in *The Soul of a New Machine*, carpentry in *House*), so it's no surprise that *Among Schoolchildren* reads like a novel. It draws its strength from the combination of Mrs. Zajac's spunky personality and Kidder's fine powers of observation. (Note the "sweet and forest-like" smell of construction paper, the sapling trunks wrapped in cloth "like racehorse legs," and especially his serious attention to the children themselves, as in his description of the heel-and-toe dance a reluctant student performs on his circuitous route to the pencil sharpener.) Then too, there's the format, which is organic, so to speak—naturally following the round of the school year.

In September we watch Mrs. Zajac setting up her empty classroom. She moves the desks into her favorite, unorthodox arrangement and tacks a paper apple to the door. On the first day of school she welcomes her students, doing her best to view them as blank slates and to ignore the dishearteningly bulky cumulative records that accompany some of them. But as early as the second day, certain problem children have declared themselves—in particular cheeky little Clarence, who refuses to do his homework. And Mrs. Zajac does expect homework. ("I'm sure you've all heard. The only meanie gives homework.")

The paper decorations change with the seasons, Mrs. Zajac dons her perennial green coat, and Clarence becomes more difficult—disrupting class and bullying the other students and displaying open defiance. Pam, the student teacher, passes the acid test—three days of handling the class entirely on her own, while Mrs. Zajac restlessly patrols the hall outside and listens to the chaos within. "Pam took Clarence 202," Mrs. Zajac remarks later. New students appear, old students leave. One who leaves is Clarence, exiled to a system that deals with harder cases, and Mrs. Zajac truly mourns him. It's clear she regards him as one of her failures, although the reader, having also suffered through Clarence 202, can only marvel that she managed as well as she did.

Spring comes, and with it those signs of spring thaw that we all remember from our own grade-school days—a field trip (with Mrs. Zajac, thrillingly, in blue jeans), the science fair, and a gradual loosening of the classroom routine. Mrs. Zajac is about to say goodbye to these children, and she's plainly going to miss them all—prodigies and troublemakers alike. On the last day before summer vacation, she's in tears—but she's smiling too, shaking her head over a floral offering stolen from someone's yard.

Mrs. Zajac's third-grade teacher was a woman named Gertrude Harty. Tracy Kidder tracked down Miss Harty for her recollections—all affectionate—of Chris Zajac as a child. Then he tracked down a student whom Mrs. Zajac herself had taught in one of her earliest classes. Suzanne's recollections, too, are affectionate. But as Tracy Kidder says:

> There was a difference between the way Miss Harty had inspired Chris and Chris had inspired Suzanne, a generational difference. When Chris was growing up, teaching was still one of the best jobs available to a bright, ambitious woman, especially one with working-class parents. That, of course, was no longer true. Chris knew Suzanne wouldn't become a teacher. "Suzanne's too smart." In fact, Suzanne was hoping to go to Harvard Law School.

Among Schoolchildren demonstrates a number of points. Our schools are often holding pens for children whose parents are unable or unwilling to do their own part in encouraging learning; our teachers are brutally overworked and insultingly underpaid. (Mrs. Zajac earns $25,532 annually after 13 years on the job.) But the most important point of all is that question of status.

Remember how we used to view our teachers? They were goddesses—their every new hairdo or piece of clothing the subject of endless whispered comment. We fantasized that they would take us home with them, even adopt us. We were shocked, encountering them in grocery stores, to find that they purchased items so prosaic as bleach and toilet paper. *Among Schoolchildren* reminds us of that earlier vision of the profession. Mrs. Zajac's own pupils share that vision, for the most part, but many of the parents do not; nor does the outside world in general. You can't help wondering if the downward progression of education in this country might be explained at least partly by the fact that we no longer see our teachers as the genuine heroines and heroes they are. I vote to erect a statue of Mrs. Zajac, for starters. She could be holding up her teacher finger and delivering a lecture in her teacher voice—clearly, a woman who did not fall off the turnip cart just yesterday. •

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

R. P. Blackmur, Cleanth Brooks, and so forth) demonstrably assumed that new readings were perfectly feasible, and useful. I doubt if before Trilling anyone had read Wordsworth's Immortality Ode in the light of Freud's theories of infant psychology, and Trilling was surely aware of this. The point is that the newness of the readings in this generation was not dictated merely by competitiveness, as is now often the case, but also by a desire to bring new light to bear on the elusive multiplicity of the literary work. One wonders whether that aspiration is as hopelessly superannuated as Lipking claims.

ROBERT ALTER
Berkeley, California

Lawrence Lipking replies:

Robert Alter misreads "Competitive Reading"—or reads it competitively—when he associates it with "radical indeterminists." What I have really bought into is the history of reading. That is, I believe that reading *has* a history, that people in different times and places read according to different assumptions, and that from time to time those assumptions change. Our own time may be going through such a change. The notion of the *episteme*, or ways of knowing that separate one age from another, can exaggerate differences. Its advantage, however, is that it avoids the trap of regarding change as "malaise"—a falling away from the golden age before "the disappearance of reading" (Alter's own phrase). Reading has not disappeared. If young critics now read less well than

HOW TO EXECUTE AN AGENCY

by E. Waterhouse Allen

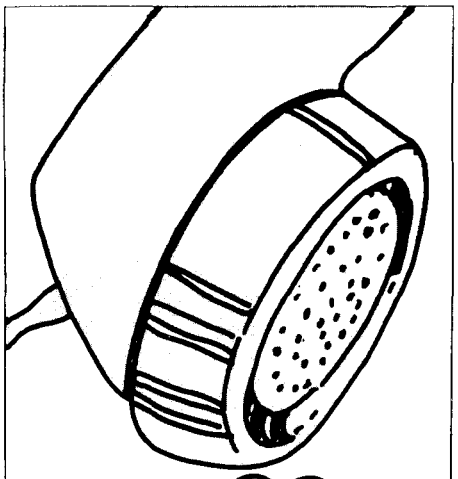
Wicked, informed satire about Bureaucratic Types you should recognize! Distilled from 50 years work in human service agencies. 1st edit., $3.95.

BARK-BACK
P.O. Box 235, Glenshaw, PA 15116.

Time moans that Congress has indulged in a "politically irresistible orgy of tax cutting. . . . Washington cannot say no to any kind of giveback." Ah, the rapacity of these people who want to keep their own money! What's happening to the national fiber?

To subscribe to *National Review* call 1-800-341-1522, or write NR, 150 East 35th Street, New York, NY 10016.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THE NEW REPUBLIC SUBSCRIBER SERVICE IS ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY.

Do you have any questions about payments? Change of address? Delivery or other subscription problems?

Just pick up your phone and dial our toll-free hotline at

800-274-6686
(In Co: 303-447-9330)

Our operators are specially trained to provide you with quick, efficient subscription service.

For most efficient service, please have a copy of your latest magazine handy. If you have a question concerning payment, please have a copy of your cancelled check in front of you so we can quickly resolve your problem over the phone.

Of course, we can still handle your business by mail if you prefer. Simply send us a copy of your address label from the front of your last magazine and your change of address or other correspondence to:

THE NEW REPUBLIC
P.O. Box 56515
Boulder, CO 80322-6515

Request for new subscriptions, renewals of current subscriptions and gift subscriptions should also be sent to the address above.

By phone or by mail, TNR Subscriber Service has never been easier.

their elders in some respects, in other respects they read better. I have tried to weigh the gains against the losses. The point is not that one generation knew or knows the one right way to read, but that new light—and darkness—can come from many directions. Alter's own work has taught me much about the history of reading. But I do not think he understands how much that history has changed in the last generation, or how much it remains in motion.

Land of the rising pun

To the editors:

As an aspiring political satirist, I was much alarmed by Joe Queenan's article about the Japanese invasion of the American political satire market ("Japun, Inc.," October 16). Although I believe trade restrictions to be neither desirable nor necessary, several steps can be taken to help us get back the competitive edge:

1. Establish government price supports for American satire. Non-recourse loans can guarantee a fixed per-word income for domestic writers so that they can charge periodicals less but still make good money.

2. Enact domestic content legislation requiring that a fixed percentage of each imported satirical piece be written by Americans.

3. Mandate that American writing be labeled "Made in the USA" while Japanese writing must be marked "Remember Pearl Harbor."

4. Ship Dan Quayle to Japan and make him vice prime minister. This will give Japanese writers more incentive to keep their satire at home.

American political satirists *can* compete. They just need a level playing field.

MICHAEL FUMENTO
Champaign, Illinois

Perusing capitalism

To the editors:

In analyzing the sources of conflict in Peru, Tina Rosenberg engages the best and worst American liberal conceits ("Thesis Disperuvian," October 9). On the best side, she posits history has not ended. On the worst, she discounts the revolution in human freedom on which Francis Fukuyama bases "The End of History." By targeting capitalism as the primary injustice that the Shining Path is battling, she ignores the real economic and bureaucratic structures that hobble Peru.

The country's antiquated centralizing structures produced a constipated economics that was labeled "capitalism" in Marxist-dominated universities, and exploited by socialist governments since the 1930s. Long before Alan Garcia's mismanagement, the quasi-socialist bureaucracy made the incorporation of a "legal" business and "legal" movement of capital and labor so difficult that people were driven into an underground economy. Hernando de Soto, in *The Other Path*, shows the only real capitalists in Peru, narco-traffickers aside, are those in the informal sector. Entrepreneurs are responsible for 60 percent of the residential construction and the vast bulk of retailing in the devastated Peruvian economy.

Neither revolutionary Marxism nor the "rabid capitalism" of narco-traffickers is what burdens the oppressed in Peru. Entrenched bureaucratic elites are the problem. But now they are threatened by reformers who would give people greater voice in their own affairs. The freedom that flows from competition and economic choice strengthens the desire for choice in the political arena. Rosenberg is correct to point out these anti-democrats are not yet history, but misses the point about the forces that will eventually put them away.

ROBERT HENDERSON
Arlington, Virginia

Duking the issue

To the editors:

In his article on David Duke, Larry Cohler writes that since the 1960s Republicans have been able to attract the "racist component" of the South "without having to appeal to racism" ("Republican Racist," September 18 & 25). I'd like to know what he would qualify as an appeal to racism. How about denouncing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as did Barry Goldwater, the Republican presidential candidate for that year? Duke is more than the end result of tactics or strategy; he's a Lester Maddox, a J. B. Stoner from Louisiana, a mutation from the ludicrous to the frightening. Like a strain cultivated and kept alive in a petri dish, he embodies a collective unconscious that shows itself primitive and inhumane—exactly what Republicans, for more than two decades, have quietly lusted after, courted, and won. Let them now stand naked, publicly displayed, side by side, with their bedfellow.

JALAINE HALSALL
Tucker, Georgia

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Rafting

IN HIS FEISTY DAYS, BARRY GOLDwater said that the Eastern seaboard should be sawn off and floated out to sea. Although there was much sense in this modest proposal, the obvious response was that California should be cut free from its mooring to the mainland and left to drift into the pale blue Pacific, its inhabitants lazing obliviously on a sun-drenched, gently rocking platform. There are even those who look furtively to the San Andreas Fault to do the job. After all, the movement along the Fault is known amiably to geologists as rafting. A government geologist once returned from a field trip to Baja California, to report that he had found there a "Peruvian-like landscape," an announcement that caused, we are told in Ron Redfern's *The Making of a Continent*, "neither consternation nor disbelief" among his superiors. A "bit of Peru" had turned up in the Baja Peninsula, "rafting along the coast."

BUT THERE IS NOTHING AMIABLE about an earthquake that registers 6.9 on the Richter scale. Indeed, as one laments the deaths and injuries, there is much to praise in the performance of northern California—not least the effectiveness of strict building codes. If a two-deck expressway was one of the structures that crumpled disastrously, one can only say that one has for a long time looked warily at the slovenly standards of many such constructions. Soldiers are trained to break stride when crossing a bridge, because of the vibrations they would cause if they marched in step. Yet it is not long since the gallery of a new hotel collapsed because of the vibrations during a tea dance. Stadiums, also subject to vibrations from stomping and cheering crowds, collapse. One can only cross one's fingers at the decision to continue the World Series in Candlestick Park.

ANY GOOD OR HARM THAT TOUCHes California makes one re-examine one's love-hate regard for it. Love-hate for one's neighbors is the most human of attitudes to them. Britain and France, only 20 miles apart across a ditch, have for 2,000 years regarded each other with the same grudging acceptance as hapless men concede to women: Can't live with 'em. Can't live without 'em. The truth is that California is intricate and hugely diverse, much more so than in the image it cultivates, or is nourished in the writings of, say, Joan Didion, who finds only herself there—as she finds only herself wherever she roams with a publisher's advance, a quest as vacuous in inspiration as in the anorexic volumes she then produces.

STILL THE BEST BOOK ON CALIfornia was written 104 years ago by one of the greatest of the golden age of American philosophers, Josiah Royce. His parents were among the last of the forty-niners who made the grim trek from the East, to settle in Grass Valley, a mining community northeast of Sacramento. There in 1855 Royce was born, "a place," as he wrote later, "five or six years older than myself." He was only 30 when he wrote *California. . .: A Study of the American Character*. The book, elegantly reprinted in 1948 by Alfred A. Knopf, is absorbing, masterly, prophetic. In his *Fugitive Essays*, he wrote with lyrical conviction of the state. He was 11 when his parents moved to San Francisco, and after a rainstorm used to sit at "my little station on the hillside" above the Bay that has just suffered, "calm and restful after its little hour of tempest. . . . But I have here . . . to speak not of Nature but of Life. And I shall undertake to deal with a few problems . . . because I am a Californian, . . . little bound to follow mere tradition.

ROYCE LATER WROTE OF HIS PHIlosophy, connecting it to his California boyhood, "I strongly feel that my deepest motives and problems have centered about the Idea of the Community." Community, he believed, was a matter of obligations as well as rights. He wished to teach "the sacredness of a true public spirit." He had been raised amid the too frequent lawlessness of the "sturdy and sinful life" of the pioneers and miners, admiring "their undoubted instinctive skill in self-government," but deploring its lack of restraints, the "social apathy, the treasonable public carelessness," that allowed strong and evil men to be exempt from the moral order. That was why the impulse for social reform was so flabby, and from his contemplation of the tumultuous infancy of his native state came the bolt of lightning. California sought "a sort of irreligious liberty. . . . In short, the Californian has too often come to love mere fullness of life and to lack reverence for the relations of life." I know of no other phrase that captures so fully the strength, seduction, and flaw of California—and so of "the America character."

YOU HAVE TO DRIVE SLOWLY through California to grasp its complexity. Come in from Oregon to Del Norte county, still the old lumber country of the Northwest, then cut inland from Eureka, over the mountains, following the flatbed trucks carrying massive tree trunks around precipitous hairpin bends, while the Porsches of the yuppies hurtle dangerously past. At Redding, one of the two crucial east-west, north-south intersections of the state, you come to another country, turning south into the Central Valley, made unimaginably fertile by immense irrigation projects. To the west rears the gigantic granite mass that is eroded into the Sierra Nevada. At Sacramento, the capital because it is the pivotal intersection, cut west again to the Napa and Sonoma valleys, and intoxicate yourself in the sun and free-flowing hospitality of the wineries. So to the Bay of our concern. Gertrude Stein was wrong in saying of Oakland that there was no there there, even before San Franciscans recently began moving across the Bay, threatening it with gentrification. It is a great port and industrial city, throbbing with ethnic diversity. And still you are in northern California. Before you lies the most spectacular stretch of Pacific Coast Highway, Los Angeles, and of course San Diego—its character marked increasingly by its proximity to Tijuana, with which its forms almost one city. The commuting of law-abiding Mexicans (not the migrant workers exploited by agribusiness) is one of the most remarkable, uncelebrated daily episodes in the United States.

AND ALL AROUND, FOREVER changing, has been the "mighty and lovely" Nature that Royce knew. Once, on the Pacific drive, I got out to look down to a small cove in the rocky shore. An extended family of seals was picnicking there: grandmothers, aunts, parents, squabbling children, where man could not, without mountaineering, reach them. One seal was touching up her face, another was slapping the kids. Tired of sunbathing, the teenage daughter dipped in the sea. If the pups were howling for lunch, one of the elders plunged into the waves and came out with a fish in its mouth—true Californians. But so were the surfers who stood one day in a phalanx at the head of a beach south of LA, holding their boards blazoned with heraldic emblems like Homeric shields. Bronze, blond, and neuter, they advanced to the waves, displayed their skill, then marched back, not a word said. Long ago a very un-Didionesque writer remarked: To drive along the Pacific Coast road on a sunny day, the sea to one's right, the mountains climbing to the left, with the top down, and someone on the radio crooning, "You are my ho-o-ney, Ho-o-neysuckle, I am the bee," is bliss. That too, unforgivably, is California.

HENRY FAIRLIE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ready to say Uncle?

Property of
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE LIBRARY
Big Sandy, Texas

Frustrated by the failure to hold the line on soaring health care costs, many business leaders are calling for some type of national health plan. Who can blame them?

As it stands, we now spend *131% more* per citizen on health care than Japan. For every $2 of operating profits, U.S. corporations pay close to $1 for health benefits.

At the CIGNA companies, we believe a national health plan is not the answer. But we do agree a fundamental change is needed. And we've responded with Integrated Managed Care.

Unlike earlier cost-containment measures, which were effective but too narrow in focus, it targets a company's entire medical expense.

Through a long-term partnership with each of our clients and local providers of medical services, it helps to both check skyrocketing medical costs and deliver quality care. One of our clients, for example, projects a savings of $200 million over three years.

For information write the CIGNA Companies, Dept. RC, 1600 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. You'll find we have many interesting things to say. Uncle isn't one of them.

We get paid for results.℠ CIGNA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED